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MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

BY

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M.B., & C.M.

Ex-Deputy President, Legislative Council, Madras.

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Dedicated to
the Loving Memory of
My late Revered Mother
who was an example of
Piety, Purity and Truth

FOREWORD

IT is rarely given to an organisation to aim for a great fundamental reform, to agitate for it, to secure it and to put forward a living exponent of that reform and find her exemplary all within the space of ten years. Yet, such has been the experience of the Women's Indian Association which worked for Women Suffrage in India, which was largely responsible for winning it, which had the rare good fortune of finding an ideal nominee for the position of the first woman member of a Legislative Council in British India and which now has the happiness of sponsoring a record of her experiences as a Legislator.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi is a typical product of modern India. She combines the zeal of a student for knowledge with the simplicity of the maiden brought up in a country home, the love of a universal mother and the dedication of a sannyasi for the advancement of her sex.

By her sincerity of purpose and by her independence of thought and judgment and action, she has created a method of service for her sisters which will long remain an honoured precedent. As freedom is a fundamental of her life and character, her

act of renouncing the Council as a protest against the imprisonment of the most revered saint of India, Mahatma Gandhi, was inevitable to one of such tried powers of self-sacrifice and principle.

The Women's Indian Association is more than honoured in having her as a Vice-President, and it believes the world generally will welcome this account of public service performed at its request and now presented with loving pride to the public as a proof of the ability and devotion of Indian Womanhood in the service of Mother India, and with the willing co-operation of Indian-manhood.

MADRAS, }
20 12 30. }

OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE
WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCTION

IN presenting this book to the public, I have two objects in view. The one is to show to such of my sisters and others who still hold the view that women are created only for the Home and men for the State, how women's activity could be profitably extended from the home to the city and how in the administration of the State as in the management of a household, women could co-operate with their men in promoting the well-being of that larger family, the nation. When I entered the Legislative Body, I possessed neither the knowledge nor the experience of public administration, but it did not take me long to discover that the several departments of administration such as Education, Health, Industries, Labour and the making of Laws, concern both men and women.

It is, therefore my fervent desire that those of my sisters who possess education, experience and knowledge should place these at the disposal of the state and find time to serve on all representative bodies, thus sharing with the men the duties and responsibilities of public life.

The other object is to demonstrate to the outside world how much Indian men honour and respect their women colleagues,

how deeply they sympathise with all our legitimate aspirations for equal rights, for equal political and social status, and how much they value our help and co-operation in the administration of the State.

If this publication achieves the two objects I have in view, I shall consider myself amply paid.

I have nothing more to add, except to explain that the speeches I have quoted were taken from the Legislative Council Manual. As written speeches were disallowed in the Council after the first year of its sitting, most of those appearing in the manual were extempore, made in the course of a debate or discussion and as such they may be found wanting in the finish and style of the written word, and for these deficiencies, I crave indulgence at the hands of the public.

MADRAS, }
 20-12-'30. } DR MRS. S. MUTHULAKSHIMI REDDI,

MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

HOW I BECAME A LEGISLATOR

IT was only at the beginning of the third Madras Provincial Legislative Council, that is about the middle of 1926, that women were granted the right to be elected or to be nominated to the local Council.

Therefore there was not much time before the election date for women candidates to do any canvassing among the electorate. In spite of the shortness of time our sister in S. Canara, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, now in Yerwada Jail, had the public spirit and the courage to announce her candidature in the press and to face election with the gentlemen candidate in her constituency, but unfortunately she was defeated by a narrow majority of votes.

Therefore, there was no other alternative for women but to be appointed to the Council through nomination. The premier Women Association in the city, namely the Women's Indian Association, that not only secured franchise for Indian women but also secured for them the right to sit in the Council, chose and sent up to Government a few names of well-known women workers (including mine) for nomination to the local Council and thus the Madras Government con-

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ferred on me the honour and the privilege to represent the women of this presidency in the local Legislative Council.

When the Women's Association pressed me to accept the honour and the high responsibility of that office, I hesitated; my reasons being, *firstly*, myself being a medical practitioner of fourteen years' standing and commanding a wide practice I thought that Council work would interfere with my medical work; *secondly*, having then recently finished a course of post-graduate study in diseases of women and children in England and having learnt the most-up-to-date methods of treatment, I did not want to exchange medical and research work for politics. *Thirdly*, I felt that I had not enough experience of public life. In short, I was neither a politician nor was I interested in politics of the country except what directly concerned the women's life even though, subsequently I found that whatever concerns men, equally concerns women and all Acts and Laws should affect both men and women alike.

However, when the Women's Indian Association pleaded that I should accept nomination to represent my sisters' cause in the Council, I could not but yield to their wishes. Therefore, with many misgivings and fears I entered this new sphere of public activity.

Hereafter the records of the local Legislative Council which lasted from December 1926 to June 1930, will speak for themselves.

ELECTION OF THE HON. PRESIDENT

ON the 14th December 1926, the new Council assembled when the election of the president took place. Rao Bahadur C.V.S. Narsimha Raju Garu was unanimously elected to the chair, on which he was congratulated by all parties in the Council. Being the only woman member in the House a few of my brother councillors desired very much that I should also address the Chair on that occasion. I had not known the president before, I had no other women friend in the House to consult on that matter and I must confess that I felt very nervous, with all eyes turned towards me, when I stood up to speak. Here is an extract from my speech :

“ Sir, I have great pleasure in congratulating you on the very lofty position that has been assigned to you by the unanimous vote of the House. I am the only lady member in this assembly, even though one half of the population are women . You know, Sir, that our position in society is still backward and we have many grievances one of which is that only two women out of every one hundred are able to read and write. So, you will side with me in all my attempts to ameliorate their condition realising that no country or nation will prosper without the active support and co-operation of its women.”

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Now I rejoice to state that the president did come up to my expectations of him and readily and willingly helped me in all my attempts to better the condition of women in this presidency as the following records will show. The Council then adjourned to meet again on the 24th January 1927.

Meanwhile it was brought to my notice that in the Chengleput District Board, in the seat vacated by a woman member, a gentleman was nominated by the Government and I immediately felt called upon to ventilate that grievance on the floor of the Council; I gave notice of certain interpellations (interpellation is the parliamentary term for question) which appeared with the Government replies on the agenda paper of the 24th January meeting.

Questions

1. Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal has been received from the President of the Chengleput District Board or the Collector of Chengleput for filling up the vacancy caused by the resignation of a lady member of the District Board; and if so ; when ;

(b) whose name was recommended to the Government ;

(c) if the name of a lady member has not been proposed, the reasons given by the recommending authorities therefor :

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(d) what attempts were made to get a lady nominee for the place vacated by the lady member ; and

(e) whether Government will be prepared to consider the desirability of appointing a lady member in that vacancy ?

Answer

(a) to (d) The President, District Board, Chengleput, submitted proposals in July 1926 for the nomination of a lady resident in Madras in the place of Mrs. K. Sathianathan resigned. As the nominee was entirely unconnected with the district, the President was asked to suggest the name of a lady of the Chengleput District. He submitted a nomination accordingly in September 1926. The Government however considered it desirable to fill the vacancy otherwise on that occasion.

(e) The Government will consider the question of appointing a lady member when an occasion presents itself, as stated in answer to clauses (c) and (d) of question No. 19

Question

Sir, with reference to the answer to the question (a) to (d) may I ask the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government on what grounds the Government have set aside the nomination of the President of the District Board and appointed a gentleman in the vacancy caused by the resignation of a lady member ?

Government reply :

The *then* Government thought that the Board would be better served by the nomination of the gentleman."

Question

Does the hon. Minister presume that the

lady member recommended had not the requisite capacity ?

Reply

I never said anything of the kind.

We women are grateful to the hon. Dr. P. Subbarayan who did keep up his promise to the Council by nominating women to the District Boards, Educational Councils and Municipalities in the Presidency.

However, I found, later on, that owing to my shy and sensitive nature, questioning and replying was not a very agreeable task for me though the Government Members were always polite and considerate in their replies to me.

Election of the Deputy President

After the question time on that day the election of the Deputy President took place. As all the parties had already made up their minds to elect me, when my name was proposed by Mr. P. T. Rajan of the Justice Party and seconded by the Zamindar of Seithur, the whip of the Ministerialist Party, it received the unanimous support of the whole House and the hon. President announced that I was duly elected.

I very much wished that such honour and responsibility had fallen upon older and more experienced shoulders, but even then, my natural reserve and shyness prevented me from speaking out my mind, though on the

previous day, I had pleaded with my friends my incapacity and inexperience for such a high place. However I became conscious that the Council had conferred on me a great honour and a heavy responsibility and that I should discharge my duties to the best of my ability so as to bring glory and honour to my sex. Many a time I have since wished that I were only an M.L.C. and not the honoured Deputy President of the Council not because I experienced any difficulty in the discharge of my duties but because I was aware of my inexperience in parliamentary work. On the same date I spoke in support of a motion for a grant to a scheme of extension and improvements for the Government Women and Children's Hospital, Mangalore.

Here is an extract from that speech :

"I am of opinion that all the district hospitals for women and children should be properly equipped and staffed on the most up-to-date lines so that the women and the children of those districts may have the benefits of the most up-to-date treatment for their ailments because we in Madras very often get cases from the mofussils that have been badly handled and treated, also you know as well as I do, that any money spent on the health of women and children is an asset to the State."

Which speech I noticed was well received by the Council.

The Council reassembling on the 25th January, the President announced amidst

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loud applause that His Excellency has given his assent to my election as the Deputy President of the Council, when Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nayar expressed the following sentiments :

“May I say one word Sir, with reference to the election of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi as Deputy President ? I wish to convey my hearty congratulations -I am sorry she is not here- and also I convey the congratulations of the whole House to Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi. The Madras Legislative Council has given the lead to the other Legislative Councils in India in the matter of giving privileges to women. It was this Council that first passed a resolution giving the right of franchise to women and some of the other Councils in India followed the example of this Council. It was again this Council that first passed a resolution enabling women to stand as candidates for election and to be nominated as Members of this Council. I believe this is, so far as I am aware, the first instance in which a woman has been elected to preside over the deliberations of a Legislative assembly in the whole world. I know, Sir, that there have been women Governors in some of the States that form the United States of America. We know also that there have been women members in the Cabinet, for instance, in the Last Labour Cabinet in England there was a woman Minister ; but I believe there has been no instance in the world in which a Legislative Assembly chose a woman as a person to guide its deliberations. I believe it is the proud privilege of this House to have bestowed that honour upon a woman. If I may be permitted, Sir, to strike a personal note, I may say that I have had the privilege of moving both those resolutions in this house,

ELECTION OF THE HON. PRESIDENT II

—the resolution to get franchise to women, and the resolution to give the right to women to stand as candidates and as nominees to the Legislative Council. With these observations, Sir, I congratulate Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi and in all humility, this Council also.”

During the above proceedings I was not present in the Council as I was detained in a private house that morning by an urgent delivery case.

In the Chair

On the 27th January 1927, the hon. President announced that the hon. Deputy President would take the chair for the first time. The Deputy President who was taken by surprise by such an announcement, before occupying the chair, addressed the Council as follows :

“ Before taking the chair I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the Council which has conferred on me this unique honour so unanimously, and so whole-heartedly. My elevation to this seat I consider is not so much an honour to me personally as to the whole of Indian womanhood. This Presidency so far as the women's cause is concerned, has been very unique in many a respect. It was the first in granting the franchise to women, and then in admitting one of them to this Council. It has now earned the unparalleled distinction of electing her to the post of Deputy President of this council unsolicited and unasked, thereby authorising her to guide its deliberations. I hope and I am sure that our Presidency will take the lead in initiating many reforms

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conducive to the welfare of my sex. Such action on your part speaks very highly of your wisdom, statesmanship and magnanimity and above all of the honour and esteem in which you hold your women. You have demonstrated to the world that you have rightly understood the power and influence of women not only in the inner life of your homes but also in the wider sphere of your public activities. In conclusion, I wish to express to the hon. Members of this Council that I have accepted the onerous responsibilities with the full hope that I can always count upon your sympathy, co-operation and support which has already been assured to me by your unanimous vote. With these few words, I take the chair." (Applause).

I found that the Presidential Chair was too big for me and I simply sank into it, but realising very soon that I was there to preside over such an august body composed of the Members of the Madras Cabinet, the hon. Ministers, the ex-Ministers, Zamindars, Rajas, Landlords, District Board Presidents, Advocates, Lawyers, overcoming my nervousness I listened gravely and attentively to the speeches of the hon. Members. It would interest others to know that I was not then feeling very comfortable in the chair, as these thoughts were passing through my mind in rapid succession that I have accepted too much responsibility, that I might not do full justice to that high office, that the public might be disappointed in me, that I might not bring honour to my country

people but on the other hand by my failure to come up to their high expectations of me, I might lower my sex and my country in the estimation of the whole world. During that first sitting itself, I was called upon to give a ruling. The discussion was on the amendment of the Kumararaja of Venkatagiri to the Madras Famine Code. I gave the ruling which was accepted by the Council and I learnt afterwards that my ruling was correct. I now record with a feeling of pride and gratitude that whenever I was in the chair, the Council was most courteous and considerate towards me.

III

OUR BUDGET

THE month of March every year is called Budget session which is taken up with the presentation of the Budget, discussion on the same by the Council and the motions by Government for grants for the next year. Every member, I found, discussed and criticised the Budget. I wished to speak also. To avoid mis-statements in my first budget speech I had written out my speech and naturally I devoted the major part of my speech to the need in the city for a special children's hospital, to the extension of compulsory medical inspection to girls' schools, to the necessity of a woman doctor in the venereal section of the General Hospital and for the sanction of liberal grants to the women institutes.

Here is the full text of my speech :

"Mr. President, I have to thank the hon. Finance Member for the Budget he has presented the other day to this Council, in which I note with pleasure the provisions made for new schemes of expenditure, both recurring and non-recurring for the good of the people of this Presidency to the extent of 81 lakhs from the current revised revenues.

(i) the construction of a hostel for the lady students in the Madras Medical College ;

(ii) the remodelling of the General Hospital, Madras ;

(iii) the construction of new head-quarters hospital at Madura ;

(iv) a women and children hospital at Salem ;

(v) the organisation of a nose, throat and ear department in the Madras General Hospital.

Regarding the last item, I beg to submit that the special work of this particular department may be brought into operation without any delay even from the 1st of April, instead of September as the special officer intended for that department has already returned from England and as there is also an urgent demand for that special kind of medical relief in this Presidency.

Woman Medical Officer in General Hospital

Again, Sir, while I find provisions made newly for the appointment of a lecturer on venereal diseases in the Medical College, Madras, I am unable to trace in the budget any provision for the appointment of a lady doctor to attend on the female patients that go to the General Hospital, who are in most cases the innocent victims of such diseases.

Considering the very wide prevalence of venereal diseases in this country (as was discovered by Dr. Lees and Mrs. Rolfe, who have said that it is four times more prevalent here in India than in Great Britain and 50 to 60 per cent of child blindness and deafness and mental deficiency is attributable to this infection), considering the very serious and far-reaching consequences of the disease on the individual, his family and on the race, I wish proper facilities are created without any further delay in every hospital for free, voluntary and confidential treatment of infected individuals, as is done in the

other civilized countries where as a result of such facilities, the disease has been reduced by 50 per cent. within the last few years. Again I feel sorry to note that no provision has been made in the budget for the construction and equipment of a special children's hospital in the city of Madras, which as you all know, is a long-needed and a much-felt want.

Children Hospital

Sir, with a death rate of 300 per 1000 infants in Madras as compared with 69 per 1000 in England and Wales, in other words, 30 out of every 100 born in Madras never see their first birthday and what is still more deplorable with a higher morbidity rate behind, by which those that survive are weakened for life, which must necessarily lower the mental and physical power of the nation as a whole; in the face of such unpleasant facts staring at our face, we have not yet seriously thought of creating a hospital for our children. By the by, I may say we have a few hospitals for adult men and women, some for lunatics, some hospitals for animals too. None so far have we for the care and treatment of the most precious and the most valuable of the human material, the very source of the nation, I mean our infants, when their need is not merely imaginary, but urgent and great. I insist on a special hospital for children, because the child study is entirely different from that of the adult as was so very well expressed by no less an authority than Sir George Newman, the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health and of the Board of Education, London, "that a child is not merely a diminutive adult. The child constitutes a different kind of problem in Physiology, in medical education and in practice and the subject should receive particular attention. The principles of Physiology are

the same in the dog, monkey and man ; but the problems raised are different.

Again Dr. Hutchinson, an eminent physician now living, under whom I had the pleasure of working for some time, and a specialist on diseases of children admits that this is a subject which is apt to be neglected in the General Hospital for various reasons which I have no time to dilate upon now ; hence Sir, in the absence of special facilities, such as a special hospital for children, a specialized staff to teach and a sufficient clinical material to work upon, the graduates of our University know almost next to nothing of this most important branch of medicine. And no wonder then, the infant mortality rate is not appreciably decreased, in spite of all our attempts in other directions.

In other civilized countries, above all other reforms, the recent advance in Pediatrics and the rational treatment of sick infants by the average physician, has contributed in no small measure to the reduction in infant mortality.

From the press communique, dated 30th March 1926, Fort St. George, Local Self-Government Department, it will be seen that there was a proposal to build a hospital for children in commemoration of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to Madras and some money was collected. Under the fear that the proposed number of 104 beds were too many for this city the scheme was given up and the money was diverted for the building of a tuberculosis children ward attached to the Tuberculosis Hospital. While I submit that the tuberculosis is only one of the many diseases affecting children I am firmly of opinion that a General Hospital dealing with all diseases of children is an absolute necessity and from the intimate knowledge I possess

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of the mother and the children of this city that not 104 beds but even four times that number will be easily filled up, if only the hospital shows good work. Still if there is any such fear, let them make a modest beginning and start, say, with 40 or 50 beds.

School Medical Inspection

Sir, I have a word to say regarding the medical inspection of pupils in schools and colleges. No doubt, Government has made it compulsory in secondary schools for boys for which we feel thankful. But it should rapidly be extended to elementary pupils and girls as well. Again I feel, this being an important phase of preventive medicine that proper and adequate provision should be made for periodic regular medical inspection of school pupils both primary and secondary boys and girls. The inspection should be conducted by a specially trained staff and proper facilities for a successful inspection and treatment should be created by the employment of lady doctors for girl pupils whenever possible, and by the establishment of school clinics to make the system more effective, because experience of other countries in this direction has taught us that by looking after the health of the school child, the onset of many a serious adult disease could be prevented and thus the foundation for a healthy and vigorous manhood and womanhood of the country may be laid very early in life.

Additions and Improvements to the Govt. Victoria Hospital, Triplicane

I should also like very respectfully to invite the attention of the Members of the Government that the additions and improvements proposed in connexion with the Government Victoria Hospital for women, to provide for more accommodation for patients and to make it an

up-to-date teaching institution for women students attending the hospital do not find a place in the budget for the year 1927-28. From the press communiqué from the Local Self Government (the Public Health Department, January 1926), it will be seen that the scheme for the improvement of the Victoria Gosha Hospital for Women was placed before the Finance Committee and I do not see any reason why it has not found a place in the budget for the year 1927-28 in spite of the very urgent nature of the work.

Grants to Women Institutes

One word on adult female education in this Presidency will not be out of place. Considering the low percentage of literacy among women and a still lower percentage of the girls attending the secondary schools (only 13 girls out of 10,000 receive the benefit of secondary education), I request the Government to encourage the opening of more secondary schools for girls in the mofussil, wherever possible. Again with the spread of enlightenment and education among the women of this Presidency, private philanthropic institutions manned by women to help destitute women and widows of over-school age and to train them so as to enable them to earn their livelihood as vocational teachers, as nurses, as music and vernacular teachers, such as the Women's Home of Service, Mylapore, and Sri Sarada Niketanam of Guntur are in existence, and more are likely to come into existence. So I respectfully urge on the attention of the Government that such institutions should be made eligible for Government grants even though they do not conform to the prescribed educational rules, if the Government is convinced of the usefulness of such institutions. I feel that only through such a liberal policy adopted by Government in the matter of female education the stigma

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of only 2 per cent. female literacy will be removed without taxing too much the purse of Government. Before I finish I very humbly submit that the Members of the Government responsible for all the departments will make a ready and willing response to all the just demands made in my speech.

It is the usual thing for the Council members to express their views on the administration of the several departments when the Government members in charge bring their Demands before the Legislative Council for sanction. So, when the demand for the expenditure of the Excise Department was moved by the Minister in charge, we were given an opportunity to criticise the policy of the Government in regard to prohibition.

Women's view on Prohibition

“Mr. President, I rise to give expression to the opinion of the enlightened women of this country regarding this question of prohibition. It is admitted by everybody that this drink habit is harmful to the individual and to the nation from the medical, moral, economic and humane point of view. From the medical aspect, all intoxicants are considered to act as a poison upon every organ of the body and in fact on every cell in the system. So the enlightened European and Indian opinion is for the introduction of prohibition as early as possible. We are aware that Government is in sympathy with such a movement but they cannot solve the problem on account of the huge revenue that is accruing from the Excise Department. But I submit a wise Government should

take into consideration not only the income but also the other items of expenditure that they have to incur owing to the prevalence of the drink habit in the community, the enormous amount of money they have to spend on items such as hospitals, asylums, criminal administration, upon schools for the backward and imbecile children, etc. They should also take into consideration the economic loss from the diminished output of labour on account of the drink habit, and above all the misery and the disturbance of family peace, and the deterioration of the race. Of the misery and the disturbance of family peace, women have a good share because of their economic dependence in this land as daughters, as wives and mothers. They have to pay a heavy penalty as you all know, and their hardships and sufferings cannot be described adequately when they have to depend upon the income of their husbands who are addicted to intemperate habits. Whatever misfortune might afflict the country, whether famine, flood or this drink evil, the women and children suffer most, especially the Hindu women who do not inherit any property, and according to the Laws of Manu are not entitled to any share in the property, and who as daughters, as wives and mothers have to depend upon the earnings of the male members of the family. The Government can have an idea of the sad conditions of women in this country from what I have described above. I therefore appeal on behalf of the suffering women of this Presidency that Government should introduce prohibition at the earliest opportunity."

It may interest the public to know my views on the question of general administration even during the very first year of my entry into the public life.

“Mr. President, regarding this motion now before the Council I rise to say a few words. I have been listening to the very interesting discussions that have been going on since the Budget was presented to this Council, the petitions and appeals seeking help from Government, from the depressed and the minority communities against the aggression of the more fortunately placed communities, the expressions of discontent and dissatisfaction from the members of the Swaraj Party, at the unfulfilled promises on the part of the Government. I have also been listening to the soothing replies and explanations and vindications of justice coming from the members of the Government. Of course the whole position seems to be a very uncomfortable one both for the rulers and the ruled. No doubt we feel grateful and thankful to the British Government for the freedom of speech that has been granted to us, because, through the representatives of this Assembly who voice forth the feelings of the people of this province, the Government comes to know the real state of affairs in the country. I have been watching also not without a feeling of admiration the very polite and considerate replies of the European members so characteristic of the British Nation, a nation famed for its love of freedom and for its many sacrifices in the cause of liberty. I do feel that they are doing their very best to help us and teach us the art of Government. But at the same, time, I hope this Government recognises the gradual growth of the national consciousness and the increasing demand on the part of the people to control their own affairs and look after their own homes. It is a natural and legitimate craving which comes to every growing nation, as it comes to every individual, at one stage or another of its existence. I am sure the Government recognizes these legitimate aspirations on the part

of the people. We cannot deny that the British Government had conferred upon us many benefits as was prophesied by no less a person than Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the reformer and father of modern India even at the very commencement of British rule. It has bestowed on us peace, law and order ; it has brought about unification of the races through one Government, through one common language. It has brought us into intimate contact with western culture and the freedom-loving nations of the West. Above all, it has opened our eyes to our own defects. So it was not in vain that the East and the West came together. What is our lot to-day ? Having come in contact with the free nations of the West, we find to our great sorrow that we are not respected as being a subject nation. The free nations look down upon us because we are not able to manage our own affairs. So, no self-respecting Indian, with a mind to think and heart to feel could put up with such an indignity. As we are, we have to admit that we have fallen in the scale of nations, as a subject nation we do not possess those rare qualities of the mind and body which are the monopoly of the free nations of the West. No wonder, because our educational systems are all imitations. Our graduates of the universities, in spite of their high degrees, do not reap the full benefit of their education and do not possess real culture. They are wanting in originality and inventive faculty. So we have to depend on the West for all our up-to-date information and knowledge in all spheres of human activity. While I admire the average Englishman for his high level of culture, for his politeness, for his independent and manly bearing, for his discipline and orderly conduct, I feel sorry that the average Indian does not possess those qualities, except a few individuals here and there, because I feel that

we are not developing on the right lines, the lines most suited to our temperament, to our environment and to our climate. We have not been exercising our body and mind; everything is being done to us as the result of which we have not developed our trade, our industry and our commerce. We find that the percentage of literacy is low. There is never ending famine, ever-recurring epidemics; we record the greatest mortality, the average age of an Indian being 20 while that of an European is over 50. In the eloquent appeal made for Dominion Status for India, Dr. Besant said 'The people of India are appalling poor. Forty millions never know what it is not to be hungry. Seventy millions have never more than one meal a day. It is estimated that two-thirds of India's 300 millions live on three-fourths of a minimum subsistence.'

No doubt, the Government are doing their best for us. But how could you expect people coming from that distance to get familiar with our conditions and to know our temperament and administer to our demands in the way we like them to do? So, let us shoulder our responsibility in earnest, let us ask for more power to look after our own affairs. At the same time let me also impress upon the Government that we want their help and guidance for some time more. As one of the Adi-Dravida brethren expressed to me the other day, there is still the fear in the minds of the depressed classes and minority communities whether without the help of Britisher, the question of untouchability will be solved; even we women fear whether the unjust divorce and inheritance laws will be cancelled or modified without their help. While all of us Mohammadans, Christians, Hindu Brahmins, both men and women realize that the salvation of the country lies in unity and united efforts, let us even to-day

extend that liberty and fraternity to our depressed classes brethren and throw open our schools and temples and sacred shrines to them. Let us demonstrate to them that we are one with them without showing any difference between man and man, remembering the maxim 'let us live and let others live'. As our religion says 'Humanity is one as God is one', let us put that maxim to practice at once and take a crusade to the villages and enlighten the masses on these nation-building ideals. When we realise that fellowship and fraternity, no power on earth will resist our demand for freedom."

From the above speech of mine, anybody could see that I was a very moderate politician at the outset of my public life.

The discussion then turning on College administration, the site, the staff and the curriculum of the Queen Mary's College for girls came up for much criticism. The speaker laid stress on the nearness of the College to a place of public resort, and the staff being mostly unmarried women and on the unsuitability of curriculum for girls. I naturally felt called upon to reply to those criticisms:

"Mr. President, I wish to express my views on the points raised by the hon. Member. First of all, with regard to the site of the Queen Mary's College, I agree that it is quite open and it is very near to the place of public recreation; but at the same time, I must admit it is an ideal site from the point of view of health.

Secondly, with regard to the staff, it is true we have got only young women on the staff because we have no older women highly qualified to manage such an in-

stitution. Regarding the suggestion that only married women should be appointed on the staff, first of all it is very difficult to secure the services of a sufficient number of married women, and moreover, I do not think that married women will be able to devote as much time as unmarried women to the college work; their time will have to be divided between their homes and the college; the college being a residential institution the work will suffer.

Widow Problem

Thirdly, Sir, I would ask the hon. Member 'how is he going to solve the widow problem in this country?' There are millions of young widows—in future a large number of teachers will have to be recruited from them. The good of the home has been denied to them. Should we also deny to them the good things of the world outside? For my part, Sir, I would blame neither the site nor the staff; but I would only find fault with the curriculum of studies there. I feel that the present system of education has to be completely revised, because it has failed, has miserably failed to inculcate in our boys and girls, real culture, the spirit of patriotism and national unity, love of service to humanity, that spirit of self-sacrifice, self-denial, which ought to be the end and aim of all true education, because we have neglected our religion and our own literature which embody such high morals, and spiritual truths sufficient to elevate our minds and improve our character. Religions and morals find no place in the school and college curriculum of our boys and girls, the result of which is we possess more of materialism than spiritualism in a country famed for its spirituality. In this connexion, I would like to draw the attention of the educational authorities to the memorandum drawn up by the 'All India Women's Conference

on Educational Reforms' held recently at Poona. The enlightened women of India, both modern and conservative, met in response to the call from the Director of Public Instruction at the prize giving last year in Bethune College, Calcutta, who addressing the ladies present, said : ' You have asserted yourselves in the field of politics. How long is it to be before you assert yourselves in the field of secondary and higher education ? How long are you going to tolerate a man-made syllabus, a man-made system, a man-made examination, and a controlling authority in which women have no influence as the dominating arbiter of your educational destinies ? We must have the co-operation of women to help us to remedy what is wrong in women's education. I would urge that women who alone can help us adequately, should tell us with one voice what they want and keep on telling us till they get it.'

Women of India from north to south, east to west met in the historic city of Poona, women of all castes, creeds, Mussalmen, Hindus, Parsis, Brahmans and non-Brahmans, many delegates from this province also attended and they have unanimously formulated these resolutions, regarding the kind of education the future citizens and the future mothers of India ought to receive.

At that Conference, the Rana Sahib of Sangli spoke as follows ' I do not individually hesitate to affirm that Indian culture, Indian tradition, and all that is best on the part of India's womanhood will have to be preserved and secured in any future scheme. I accept the doctrine that the five-fold character of physical, emotional, mental, civic and spiritual development of women should be an essential feature of such a scheme.'

I feel, Sir, that the ancient moral stories as demonstrated in the life of Harischandra who sacrificed everything

of this world for truth, the lives of Damayanthi and Nala, of Savitri and Satyavan, must be taught first to our boys and girls, more than Othello and Desdemona, Romeo and Juliet, even though, I have the greatest admiration for Shakespeare. First of all, our boys and girls must be made to assimilate whatever is good in our own literature and religion which is easy for them to grasp and learn and then may add to that the scientific and up-to-date knowledge of the West. As we are, we are neither East nor West. We take every bit of knowledge from the West except their religion. It is religion that will form the character of the individual and help the growth of the divinity in man or woman. I myself do not know what my own religion is. It was my fortune to have come in contact with many of my western sisters during my stay in England, and in Paris. I was simply impressed with the very high sense of their duty to their fellow-beings and their high ideals of life. In the West, the women play a great role in social service work. Wherever I visited, whether the welfare centres or the venereal clinics or any organisation or society for health such as the British Social Hygiene Council, social and moral hygiene work or any orphanage or asylum, I came across this noble band of enthusiastic women workers who have consecrated their lives for such humanitarian work. Evidences of such self-sacrifice and self-denial on their part are not wanting even amidst us here, e.g., Dr. Macphail of the Rainy Hospital who has spent her whole life here in the cause of our women and children, Dr. Besant and her band of noble workers, Dr. Scudder of the Vellore Hospital, Dr. and Mr. Ferguson of the Temperance League, the late Rev. Leith. So, we cannot blame the British system of education. Only we have to formulate a system in which our religion, our past culture and tradi-

tion should have a large share and at the same time suitable to modern conditions of life."

During the same session it was pointed out to Government by one hon. Member that Western system of medical education being a costly affair, Government should encourage the indigenous system and thus rapidly extend rural medical relief with the help of the Ayurvedic Unani doctors to which observation I replied:

"Mr. President, on this motion I like to express my views, as the hon. Member wants the Ayurvedic system of treatment for the rural areas in preference to the Allopathic.

For my part I do not like to draw any comparison between the Ayurvedic and the English system. But still, I must say that in surgery and those special branches of medicine as midwifery and ophthalmology, the West has made very, very rapid strides within the last few years, while in Ayurveda there has been no progress at all for the last hundreds of years. Supposing the hon. Member had an attack of appendicitis, will he allow the Ayurvedic Doctor to operate on him? What shall we do without chloroform? Again if a woman in the village is in difficult labour, is the Ayurvedic doctor, with his present qualification, in a position to deliver her with instruments? Again for our eye defects, do we not need the assistance of the allopathic doctors to test and prescribe glasses for the same? Could we afford to lose our eyes? Could the Ayurvedic doctor examine our throat, nose and ear with specula? Again, Sir, this country is full of malaria. Could anybody cure malaria without quinine? I had a personal experience of it; my own child had

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malaria and the child refused to take quinine. I consulted the best of the Unani and the Ayurvedic doctors who were all of opinion that quinine was the only efficacious remedy for malaria. I must own, Sir, that I cherish a very high respect for the Ayurvedic system because it is cheap, available for a large number of people and is indigenous, is my own system, but I must admit also that it is an empirical and stand-still system and so has to be developed, and brought on a scientific basis with the Western systems of medicine. Certainly there are very effective decoctions and herbal remedies for ordinary common complaints but there is not much of anatomy and physiology in it. No doubt, several thousands of years ago when India had its own civilization, its own culture, the healing art was much more advanced here than in any other part of the world and there it has stopped, while the West has been making very rapid progress in anatomy, physiology, chemistry and physics and in short, in every branch of medicine, so much so, we allopathic doctors know the situation and function of the minutest artery and nerve in the human body. So until and unless we develop our system, we must necessarily go in for the allopathic cures. We ought to appreciate the good in any system and feel grateful to those great men (whom I should call 'Avatars') who have discovered such rare remedies such as vaccination for small-pox, cures for malaria, cholera, tropical dysentery, for diabetes, chloroform and morphia for operations, salvarsan for syphilis. Still in the West, they are doing research to find cures for cancer and tuberculosis and other diseases. They have discovered also the Wasserman test for syphilis and they can treat latent syphilis very successfully which no Ayurvedic doctor is capable of at present.

So in the rural areas also, we do require the services of well-trained allopathic doctors, as there is so much good in that system. At the same time, I am of opinion that Government should give every encouragement to the indigenous system for its further growth and development. As Sir P. C. Ray explained to us the other day in the Medical College that the ancient Hindus, even at the remote period of world's history, had developed their chemistry and had discovered a process of 'Distillation' which was discovered by the western scientists only a few decades before, so the desire on the part of the people to do research and investigation on the indigenous lines must be encouraged. As we are, we have to borrow surgery, midwifery ophthalmology from the West because we cannot help it.

So it is our duty to encourage the development of our system on rational and scientific lines. I would suggest that students who have a good knowledge of anatomy physiology, physics, chemistry, or even fully qualified graduates from the Medical College, Madras, who have got the aptitude for enquiry and research, should be taken and introduced into the Indian School of Medicine to learn our system and make further investigation.

There are still many dreadful diseases, such as cancer, elephantiasis, etc., for which remedies have to be found. Who knows that research if carried on on right lines, the remedies may not be found in India by the Ayurvedic scientists?

Again in regard to rural medical relief, I do not think there can be any better or more useful form of medical relief than a properly conducted medical inspection and treatment of our boys and girls in the rural schools, because the school medical service, which was started in England in 1908, has been doing very good

work for the past eighteen years and has become recognized as any Public Health service. If we want our future generation of our young men and women to possess robust health and sturdy intellect, if we want them to compete with other nations of the world successfully in the race of life, and if we want them to get on without drugs and doctors, the health training must begin even from the very beginning of life.

Our boys and girls while they are in the school, should be looked after well so that they may reach a healthy adolescence and perform the sacred duty of proper parenthood. Thus many deformities and disabilities of adult life can be prevented by early attention to the beginnings of the disease in young boys and girls. That is how the British nation has produced a healthy race.

A school-master of about thirty years standing in England said 'to stop the school medical service would be a national disaster and tragedy.' For such a service, the services of rural medical practioners may be availed of.

So, I would very respectfully ask the hon. Minister in charge to introduce proper medical inspection in all the primary and secondary schools for both boys and girls. The work should be entrusted to a specialized staff so that they may know what and where they should look for in children for commencing signs of disease. For girls, travelling lady doctors may be appointed similar to Inspectresses of Schools and wherever possible, school clinics should be opened. That the lay public are in favour of it is seen from a series of articles which have appeared in the *Hindu* of late and which contain many useful hints and suggestions for such a work. By adopting such preventive steps, we will be laying the foundation of a healthy vigorous national life and I may humbly

submit also that the money spent in improving the health and physique of the nation is money well spent."

It was brought to my notice that the Government Victoria Hospital was in urgent need of additions and improvements which matter I placed before the Council.

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state :

(a) whether the question of additions and improvements to the Government Victoria Caste and Gosha Hospital has ever been considered by the Government, and if so when ;

(b) the stage the question has now reached ;

(c) when it is likely that the work will be put in hand ;

(d) whether the Government are aware that the women medical students of the Lady Wellington Medical School who receive clinical instruction at the above hospital have no well equipped laboratory in the said hospital for want of sufficient accommodation ;

(e) whether it is a fact there is only one labour room in the hospital, and that room is used for clean as well as septic and eclamptic cases ;

(f) whether it is a fact that the labour room is located so near the public road as to attract a crowd when a woman cries out with labour pains ;

(g) whether it is a fact that the out-patients have to wait in the passages for want of a proper waiting hall ;

(h) whether it is a fact that the hospital has only 82 beds ;

(i) whether the hospital has been admitting more

patients than the sanctioned number of beds; if so, the daily average of in-patients during the year 1926 ;

(j) whether the Government ever considered the question of providing additional beds for the hospital; and

(k) how many additional beds will be provided for the said hospital in 1927-28 ?

Answer

(a) & (f) After the Government took over the management of the Victoria Caste and Gosha Hospital in 1920, the question of adding to and improving the accommodation was considered, but the scheme was abandoned in favour of the Marina Hospital scheme which included the construction of a larger and more up-to-date hospital for women. For the reasons explained in the Press Communique, dated 30th March 1926, a copy of which is attached, the Government decided to abandon the Marina Hospital scheme and adopt in its place an alternative scheme devised by the Surgeon-General and the Consulting Architect to the Government. According to the revised scheme, Victoria Caste and Gosha Hospital will be retained on its present site and will be enlarged by the addition of an operation theatre, a post of operation ward (ten beds), a children's ward of thirty beds, a general ward of twenty beds and a delivery room and labour ward of twenty beds, making in all an addition of eighty beds.

(b) The Government have called for a complete estimate of the cost of the whole scheme.

(c) The question of providing funds for the execution of the scheme will be considered after full details of the cost involved has been received.

(d) to (h) Yes.

(i) Yes. The daily average attendance of in-patients for the year 1926 was 97.52.

(k) The revised proposals provide for an addition of eighty beds in all. It is not possible to state definitely at present how many additional beds will be provided during the next year.

Question

Are the Government aware that in a room of 15 feet 9 inches breadth, 15 feet 6 inches length, and 16 feet height students have to do all laboratory testing and that gynaecological examination, minor surgical operation, out-patient dressing, intra-venous injections, collection of blood from out-patients for transmission to Guindy for testing, are also carried on to the great inconvenience of students, patients and the staff ?

Question

Considering that this question has been before the Government since 1922, and considering the urgent necessity for the improvement, will the hon. the Minister be pleased to expedite the scheme and come up to the Council again for a supplementary grant in the month of August or September next ?

It did elicit much sympathy from one and all in the Council and the then Minister promised to expedite the matter but I regret to state that little has been done so far to satisfy the above demands.

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in the Fort St. George Gazette of the 22nd February 1927 the appointment of a gentleman to a nominated vacancy in the Chengleput District Board has been notified ;

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(b) if so, why a lady was not nominated ; and

(c) who was the second lady nominee recommended by the District Board President in September last for the lady vacancy ?

Answer

(a) Yes.

(b) The appointment of M.R.Ry. Frank V. Venkatarangam Avergal referred to in clause (a) was made because there was no member of the Indian Christian community on the Board. As stated in the answers to questions Nos. 10 and 19 on 24th January 1927, the Government will consider the question of appointing a lady member when an occasion presents itself in future.

(c) The Government do not think it desirable to furnish the name of a person whose nomination was not accepted by them.

Government Answer

I am sure the hon. Member will admit that when we are thinking of giving representation to minority communities, the Indian Christian community must be taken as a smaller minority community than even the ladies who are in a majority. (Laughter).

Question

Yes, but is the hon. Minister aware that even though the ladies are in majority, there are no lady representatives on the various local boards (Hear, hear) and on that account they form the most minority community so far as representation is concerned ?

Answer

Only recently, in order to meet the wishes of the hon. the lady Member who is very jealous of the rights of ladies, I nominated a lady to the South Arcot District Board."

IV

CHILDREN HOSPITAL

The 31st of March was a very important day for me as the resolution for the establishment of a special hospital for children was coming up for discussion on that day.

I was anxiously looking forward to that motion being reached that day as it was the last day in that session. The Council rule in regard to resolutions is that it should go through the ballot and even if it should pass the ballot successfully, the non-official days in every session being few in number, that particular resolution might not be reached at all during that session, in which case, it would involve another notice of the very same motion, another balloting, etc., and consequent delay. It is a matter of luck and chance to get the resolution actually moved in the Council.

I was sitting till late in the afternoon in the Council chamber full of anxiety and excitement. Then just for a few minutes, I retired into my room when the previous bill which was being discussed having been withdrawn by the mover, the President called for my name, but fortunately my friend Dr. Mallaya whom I had requested to second my motion, happened to be in his seat

and seeing me absent, got the permission of the House to move it in his name which was readily granted by the House. Meanwhile I rushed in and I was there only to second the motion but Dr. Mallayya had made a short, sweet and impressive speech.

In this connection, I desire to impress upon the public that whatever I was able to achieve in the Council, even though the initiative came from me yet if the Council had not extended its ready and willing co-operation and wholehearted support, the result would have been almost nil.

“Sir, I heartily second the motion. I need not repeat here that the idea of Children's Hospital has been long before our minds. Every time mention was made of the terrible death rate of infants in our Presidency, the necessity for a special hospital for children was felt very acutely indeed, both by the medical as well as the lay public. Again as every one of you is aware after the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, we thought that this long expected boon was going to be given to this province, but soon after, came the disappointment that the money collected for the purpose has been diverted, as explained to you last time, in the Press Communique, dated 30th March 1926, Local Self-Government Department (P.H.), to the construction of a tuberculosis ward for our children and a few beds in other hospitals thus allotting to our children a secondary place, in spite of the great and very urgent need that existed for a separate hospital for them.

No doubt, Sir there are few beds in the General Hospital, a few in the Women and Children Hospital. I

may tell you, Sir, even though it is called Women and Children Hospital, the children are few in number having only 24 beds as compared with their total population, and take a secondary place. No special attention is given to them. There is no specialist in charge of the children, no special equipment in that hospital for children such as a milk modifying laboratory or the Physio-Therapeutic department, nor are there any specially qualified nurses to look after them. Dr. Hutchinson, an eminent physician of London, when talking about the clinical examination of children, gives the student the following advice: 'The method of examining and handling a sick child does not come to you by intuition, and the man who starts for the first time to study the diseases of children is like a traveller in a foreign country. He hears a strange language spoken which he does not understand: at all events, if the language is not absolutely strange, it is spoken with a foreign accent; for, the physical signs of disease are often different in children from what they are in grown up people and so the students have to devote special attention to their interpretation,' moreover as the child is unable to describe to the doctor the nature of the suffering, the students have to develop their power of observation very much indeed.'

Again in the handling and examination of children one has to learn gentleness and tact which will come only with care, experience, practice and above all, training under competent teachers.

As that learned doctor again says, the subject of diseases of children is one which is apt to be neglected in General Hospital for more than one reason. The first reason is that adult patients are so very numerous, their claims on the staff are so very pressing that there is very little time left for special teaching in the children's wards.

It has its explanation in this further fact that the teaching in the General Hospital is directed generally to the requirements of qualifying examinations and no demand is made at the ordinary qualifying examinations for a special knowledge of the diseases of children, the consequence of which is that many men and women, when they qualify themselves know almost nothing of the commonest ailments of infancy. So when going out into practice, you are not much better informed than the mother or the nurse as to the diseases you have got to deal with. And still you will find that in any large general practice children make up a great part and perhaps the greater part of the patients, and the serious nature of the disease will be brought home to you by a study of the death-rates; whereas the adult mortality is 4 per 1000, the infantile mortality is 150 per 1000, which is not creditable to our profession (this was the condition prevailing in England before 1911.)

Since then many changes have taken place. The great business of child reform began. Hospitals were built for sick children. Infant welfare centres and milk depots were established. Further, a knowledge of the diseases of children and treatment was introduced as a compulsory subject in the medical curriculum of students and both in the out-patients and in the in-patients wards, special provision was made to give practical instruction on this subject to students qualifying for examinations, extending in some hospitals to three months and in some even six months' course. The result has been an immense saving of life, and a steady improvement in the health and the physique of the child as reported by no less a man than Sir George Newman, the Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health. Now, I ask, how much more appropriate are the above remarks of Dr. Hutchinson made

before the year 1911, to us here who record a mortality of 300 per 1000? How much more energetic we should be in this business of child reform with a death-rate like 300 per 1000—a figure that astounds the civilized world?

Again Dr. Holt, the great American Physician, an authority on diseases of children says in his book: 'Therapeutics in infancy consists in something more than a graduated dosage of drugs. Many therapeutic means which are valuable in adults are useless in children, and many others which are of little value in adults are extremely useful in children.' Showing that child's study is entirely a different one from that of the adult.

Again, without the help of a special hospital and special equipment for children, study and research into ailments of our children and also teaching the students on that subject is not possible. In the English hospitals and in the English books much prominence is given to rickets, scurvy, rheumatic affections of childhood, diseases peculiar to cold countries which are rather rare here. It will do us, Indian students, not much good to devote too much time to such diseases. Here in the tropics, we have to tackle other problems such as a typical forms of malaria, kala-azar, dysentery, tropical jaundice, etc. I may tell you here that signs and symptoms of malaria in children are not the same as those in adults. There is then prevalent among the Brahmin children a certain diseased condition of the liver called in Tamil 'கட்டி' infantile tropical. The aetiology and cure have not been found yet even though many of our children succumb to this every year. I have listened, to many a sad and pathetic tale from mothers who have narrated to me with tears in their eyes how they have been losing their children one after the other from this dire

disease. In the West they have found remedies for rickets, scurvy, rheumatism, diphtheria and smallpox, through persistent research and study. What was possible there will be possible for us here also. If we only take the trouble of studying and analysing a large number of such children, very soon we may strike at the root cause. As we are, we are indifferent to such sad occurrences amongst us, and the vast amount of human suffering which they involve.

Again, regarding the diet of our children, we are simply copying the West. The present method of scientific feeding in the absence of mother's milk is this—diluted and sterilised cow's milk, supplemented with sugar, cream, fruit juice, etc. Is it possible for poor mothers of our country to carry out the above instructions? If we want to live as a nation should we not find a diet for our infants suitable to our climate and conditions of life here? As it is, the practitioners very often prescribe the tinned foods for infants in the place of human milk or diluted cow's milk without any of the above mentioned necessary adjuncts to make it a complete food. I can only point out to the house that such an ignorance and indifference on our part is not at all excusable when the whole civilized world is tackling this problem of infant welfare most seriously and earnestly and has achieved very many tangible results.

Indian children have suffered much and are still suffering for want of a separate hospital. Can anybody in this House conceive of a better, wiser and more useful form of medical relief viewed from the human, from the scientific and from the nation's standpoint than the one proposed in this motion, to give relief to our innocent young, the speechless and helpless millions of India who are to be the future bulwarks of the State?

I have heard hon. Members of this House complaining about the large amount of money that is spent on hospitals, on the doctors and drugs. My answer is, so long as we ignore the preventive aspects of medicine, so long as we are blind to the immediate needs of the nation, we are bound to suffer, our money, our leisure and our energy are bound to go to waste. To prevent unnecessary human suffering, disability, disfigurement, and avoidable mortality of infants and at the same time to save our money and labour, I would most earnestly beseech you to direct your attention to the preventive side of medicine and lay the foundation of a healthy life by replacing quack treatment of our infants and children with up-to-date scientific treatment and by looking after the health of school boys and girls with properly conducted medical inspection.

Sir, much infantile mortality is preventible. In England the infant mortality in 1901 was 128 per 1000; in 1924 only 69. The amazing decline was due to preventive medicine. As we are, we cannot but admit that the majority of us are under-developed and under-nourished, are unable to bear the stress and strain of modern life as is revealed by our mortality returns (for Europe 4 per 1000. for India 42 per 1000), by our average age of living (20 for an Indian and 50 for an European) and by our capacity to work.

No doubt there may be other contributory causes—social and economical, but one of the main causes if not the chief cause, in my opinion, is the negligent and indifferent treatment given to our children—our boys and girls. Because, in my experience, the rural child even though starved, keeps better health than the over-fed children of the well-to-do classes. So we cannot attribute all our ill-health and disease to poverty and premature

motherhood, because most of our children when born have a healthy appearance. In a few days or months they develop a sickly look as a result of mismanagement or improper and unscientific methods of feeding in the absence of breast milk. No wonder that such ill-nourished children readily fall a prey to all kinds of infantile ailments, especially in the absence of rational treatment.

Again the general physique of our children is low. When I landed in India after my recent visit to the West, the difference in the appearance of our children as compared with that of the European child was very poignantly brought home to me, the anaemic, pale, sallow cheeks of the majority of our children as contrasted with the rosy fleshy cheeks of the European ones, the thin wasted limbs of ours as compared with the muscular, round limbs of the Western children, their cheerful and happy expressions with the melancholy and dejected looks of our children. True, the racial and climatic differences may be seen in contour, and colour but need not be in health and vigour which are not the monopoly of any one race or climate.

In the face of what civilised nations have been doing towards the solution of the problems of infantile mortality and morbidity, we in India, have to admit that we have been guilty of very great injustice towards the treatment of our children. Now in England and Wales, there is abundant provision for the care and treatment of children and enormous facilities exist for carrying on research and experiments. There are more than half a dozen special children hospitals in the city of London alone in addition to children's wards in every big general hospitals. Many of the maternity and child-welfare centres have a few beds for children ailing from digestive troubles where mothers are kept and taught the art of

looking after their infants. There are children's homes where they are admitted for minor ailments, day nurseries where the poor mothers leave their children when they go out for their work. There are a number of nursery schools for children below the age of 5 besides convalescent homes for weak children and foundling hospitals and orphanages. As the result of such wide, well-thought-out organizations and centres of health the infant mortality within the last few years has come down to 69 per 1000. So, look at the frantic and co-ordinate efforts of other nations to save the child's life.

In the face of such honest attempts on the part of other nations and such authoritative views as expressed by such eminent experienced and practical physicians like Dr. Robert Hutchinson, Dr. Holt, Sir George Newman for special hospitals for children and for special teaching of students on the subject are we justified in tolerating this kind of indifferent treatment to our children, the future citizens of the State, on whose health and welfare depends the prosperity and progress of the country? When we are also conscious of the fact that 'there is no more promising field of medicine than the prevention of diseases in children only those who can fathom the depth and intensity of a mother's love for her ailing infant, can adequately realize what it means to the mother to see her helpless infant suffer, on whom her life-happiness centres, what it is to see that spark of life being extinguished for ever for want of proper care and treatment. What sacrifice would such a mother not undergo if she is only convinced that the remedy is near at hand? The Indian mother who will fast for days together and who will undertake arduous journeys to beget a child, who will forego all her wealth, leisure and her pleasures for its sake, would she not admit her child

into a hospital if she is only sure of good treatment and its certain recovery ? I leave it to the hon. Members to judge.

Child's study being a different one from that of the adult, I feel convinced that it should be developed as a separate science and art, and be given an important place in the medical curriculum of students, as any other subject like ophthalmology, Midwifery and Gyneacology and not be made a secondary thing as it is being done now by allotting a few beds for children in the several hospitals."

The Government and the European non-officials voting against, the majority of the Justicites remaining neutral and the majority of the Congress voting for the motion, the resolution was declared carried. (Then the Congress was in full strength in the Council). I must state in all fairness to the Justice Party which was then led by that able statesman and a born leader—The Raja of Panagal—that in no motion of mine, even though he might disagree with me in the ways and means of attaining the end, he ever voted against me. So he and some of his party members remained neutral on this occasion.

I chose the subject of a special hospital for children for my first resolution because after what I have seen in England of the facilities for the care and treatment of children, I felt that in India both in hospitals and outside gross ignorance and neglect prevailed in

regard to that subject as the result of which many infants suffer and die from preventible illnesses and many more become permanent invalids. Having gone through bitter experience with my own children in spite of my being a brilliant medical graduate and an experienced medical practitioner and having found others whom I invited to help me in the diagnosis and treatment to be in a worse plight than myself I took the very early opportunity to bring this matter before the Government and the public.

The Government did give effect to this recommendation. The very next year they deputed two experienced medical officers, Rao Bahadur Dr. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar M.D., Assistant Superintendent of the Government Maternity Hospital and Dr. Mary John, F.R.C.S., of the Government Victoria Hospital to specialize in diseases of children in the West and on their return have opened the Children's special sections in the two hospitals, under their charge, which, we hope, will grow to their full height.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF
SCHOOL CHILDREN

AS I attach great value to a systematic and thorough medical inspection of school boys and girls, I began to gather accurate information about the scope and extent of its application in our schools and colleges. I wrote to the Department of Education, to the Corporation Educational Officer and to the Madras District Educational Officer from all of whom I learnt that there was no medical inspection in any Government girls' schools but the Corporation schools carried on regular and periodical medical inspection in their schools.

When any hon. Member makes a statement on the floor of the Council, the Member who makes the statement is responsible for the accuracy of the statement. Therefore, I had to spend much time and labour over these matters, as I had not then known any other means of obtaining the necessary information.

Very often I would envy the gentlemen members when I see them sitting together in groups and parties and discussing matters of public importance. As I desired to be above all parties, I could not join any of those political groups and therefore I was left to myself and

I had to get on as best as I could except in the cases of bills for which I could not but seek the help of one or two, of the senior legislators in the Council.

I found on thorough enquiry into the matter that while the medical inspection was compulsory in the secondary schools for boys the girls' schools were not only left out of consideration but also the mission schools that were carrying on medical inspection in the prescribed manner were not eligible for any grant. Therefore, I drew the attention of the Government both through my speech and through my repeated interpellations, to the importance of periodical and regular medical inspection of every school-going pupil by experienced medical graduates.

Not only did I give notice of a resolution : ("This Council recommends to the Government that systematic Medical Inspection of pupils should be made compulsory in all schools and colleges, whether Government or Aided, Municipal or Local Fund, and in the case of girls, inspection should be conducted by lady doctors and wherever possible school clinics should be started"), but also put the following interpellations :

**Compulsory Medical Inspection in Secondary
Schools for Girls**

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

50 MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

(a) whether it is a fact that the scheme of compulsory medical examination of pupils has been confined only to secondary schools for boys, Government or aided ;

(b) why such examination has not been insisted on in the case of the secondary schools for girls ; whether it is due to want of a sufficient number of qualified lady doctors ; if not, for what reasons ;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Government do not make any grant towards the cost of medical inspection of aided secondary schools for girls even when the management make satisfactory arrangement for medical inspection ; if the answer be in the affirmative, the reasons therefore ;

(a) whether the Government have at any time considered the desirability of introducing compulsory medical inspection in the case of secondary schools for girls at least in the city of Madras if qualified doctors are not available in sufficient numbers for serving the schools in the whole presidency ; and

(e) whether the Government have considered the desirability of employing Government travelling lady doctors for the purpose of inspection of secondary schools for girls in the Presidency ?

Answer

(a) Yes.

(b) One reason was the insufficient number of qualified lady doctors ; another was that the scheme was an experiment and it was considered advisable to restrict its operation during the experimental stage to secondary schools for boys.

(c) Yes ; the scheme does not apply to girls schools for reasons given above.

(a) The suggestion will be considered.

(e) No.

**Compulsory Medical Inspection of the Elementary
Schools Aided by Local Bodies**

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local-Self-Government be pleased to state :

(a) Whether the Government ever considered the question of compulsory medical inspection of pupils in the elementary schools, boys and girls in the Presidency, maintained by local bodies, or aided from local or municipal funds ;

(b) whether the Government have issued instructions to the local bodies in regard to the desirability of conducting periodical medical inspection of pupils in the elementary schools ;

(c) whether the Government are aware that travelling doctors are employed by some missionary bodies for conducting periodical medical inspection of pupils in the schools under their Management ; and

(a) Whether the Government have ever considered the desirability of appointing Government travelling medical inspectors for conducting medical examination of pupils in the elementary schools for each district or groups of district ?

Answer

(a) Yes.

(b) No.

(c) The Government have no information.

(d) No.

**Complaint against Medical Inspection in Government
or Aided Schools**

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

52 MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

(a) whether the Government have received any complaint against the way in which the medical inspection is conducted at present in the Government or aided schools;

(b) whether the medical practitioners now employed for medical inspection have received any special course of training to enable them to carry on thorough medical examination of pupils; and

(c) whether the report of such examinations and the advice given by such medical inspectors for the medical treatment or surgical operations of individual pupils are being communicated to the parents through the heads of the schools concerned, and whether the heads of schools have been asked to watch the progress of such pupils in regard to their health?

Answer

pls for gu.

(a) In 1926 the Director of Public Instruction brought to the notice of Government that many of the reports on medical inspection of pupils submitted to him and the Surgeon-General showed evidence of hurried inspection. The Government have issued the necessary instructions to ensure that inspections are conducted in a satisfactory manner.

(b) The attention of the hon. Member is invited to paragraph 1 (3) of G. O. No. 641, Law (Education), dated 29th April 1925, and G. O. No. 44, Law (Education), dated 9th January 1926, which have been placed on the Editors' Table. No special course of training is considered necessary.

(c) Copies of inspection cards should be sent to the parents of pupils in all cases where-in treatment is recommended. Heads of schools are expected to watch the progress of pupils in their health and no special instructions are considered necessary.

Question

In answer to clause (b) of my question it is stated that the "scheme was an experiment and it was considered advisable to secondary schools for boys." May I know when the experiment was started and how long has it continued ?

Answer

The experiment was started about five years ago Sir.

Question

With regard to the answer to clause (c) may I know how long the experiment will continue ?

Answer

The whole thing is a question of funds, Sir. So the question of costs has to be studied before any conclusions can be arrived at.

Question

With regard to question (c) Sir, the answer is "the scheme does not apply to girls schools for reasons given below." The reason may be that there is an insufficiency of qualified women doctors and that the scheme is only an experiment ; but why did the Government not extend it to those aided schools which employ their own doctors and where medical inspection is going on properly ? Why was that not done ?

Answer

As it is stated in answer to clause (d), Sir, the Government are considering the desirability of introducing the scheme in girls' schools.

Question

May I know when it is going to be ?

54 MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEGISLATOR

Answer

I cannot say definitely when that will come into force.

Question

With reference to answer to clause (d), was not this experiment confirmed in respect of boys and made compulsory ?

Answer

I believe so, Sir.

Question

May I know why the Government have not started it first in the Elementary Schools ? In England they have begun with the primary schools for the obvious reason that any signs of disease could be arrested at an earlier stage. May I know why the scheme has been begun with the primary schools here ?

Answer

There again, Sir, as I said in answer to question No. 583, it is matter of cost to state, and the question of cost has to be carefully worked out before any step in that direction can be taken.

Question

Sir, if the Government are convinced that Medical Inspection of school pupils is preventive side of medicine, may I know if they would introduce inspection in all schools as early as possible because they have now got a surplus amount at their disposal ?

Answer

We are not so sure of the surplus.

Question

With reference to clause (a) the answer is that "The Government have issued the necessary instructions to ensure that inspections are conducted in a satisfactory manner." Will the Government issue orders to the effect that qualified and experienced medical officers should be employed for this special work ?

Answer

The question will be considered.

The Government as usual pleaded want of funds to give effect to the full scheme, but to the credit of the hon. the Minister in charge of Education, it must be said that he did move a supplementary demand that very same year and when making that motion he made the following speech :

"Mr. President, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I move 'that the Government be granted an additional sum of rupees 43,700 under grant XIX-31 Education. Most of the grant is for the medical inspection of pupils in recognised secondary schools. My hon. friend Dr. Muthulakshmi, ever since she came to the Council has been demanding the medical inspection should be introduced in all schools and the Government are taking the first step towards the achievement of the object by trying to introduce it in the middle schools and elementary schools under the Government. I hope hon. Members will have no objection."

VI

DEVADASI PROBLEM

THE next subject that engaged my attention was the *Devadasi Problem*.

I have been feeling all along and feeling most acutely too that it was a great piece of injustice, a great wrong, a violation of human rights, a practice highly revolting to our sense of morality and to our higher nature to countenance, and to tolerate young innocent girls to be trained in the name of religion to lead an immoral life, to lead a life of promiscuity, a life leading to the disease of the mind and the body.

I gave notice of a resolution and I was anxiously waiting for the ballot result. Luckily for me, the ballot was successful and the resolution appeared under my name in the agenda of the 4th November. As usual, the vested interests became alarmed at my move and tried all their influence to dissuade me from moving the resolution but I was adamant and I almost took a vow that I would never rest till I get the pernicious custom eradicated from this land.

The resolution did come up before the Council and I had the honour of moving it and making a long speech. The Council was apparently moved by my speech and all

parties most enthusiastically supported my motion.

The full text of my speech has been already published in pamphlet form both in English and Tamil and is available at the address given below *

Mr.K.R. Karant, Mr.C.V. Venkataramana Aiyangar, Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar, Mr. Anjanayulu of the then Congress Party, Mr. A.B. Shetty, Mr. Syed Ibrahim, Mr. V. Munisamy Pillai, Mr. S. N. Dorai Raja of the Ministerial Group, Sir M. Krishnan Nair, Deputy Leader of the Justice Party made most eloquent and telling speeches in support of my motion but the then Law Member Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar on behalf of the Government while appreciating the very high object of the mover pointed out certain difficulties in giving practical effect to the resolution.

All the same, the original motion slightly amended was unanimously adopted by the council.

"This Council recommends to the Government to undertake legislation or if that for any reason be impracticable, to recommend to the Central Government to undertake legislation at a very early date to put a stop to the practice of dedicating young girls or young women to Hindu Temples, which has generally resulted in exposing them to an immoral life."

* No. 6. Rundall's Road, Vepery, Madras.

The local Government without trying in any manner to solve the problem simply communicated the above resolution to the Central Government.

Therefore, with the help of a lawyer-councillor I drafted a Bill to dispense with the Devadasi Service in the Temples and after getting the Government of India sanction for the same, I introduced it into the local Council, the very next year.

In this matter I was dealing with a quite different problem. My medical and educational work in the Council was very much applauded but not my social reform work. The people that had not the courage to oppose me openly in public began to work underhand and set up one or two bogus associations to write petitions to Government and distribute unworthy literature to the public to prevent my bill becoming law.

Therefore, I had to bring all the resources at my command to counteract such evil propaganda. I was constantly writing to the press on the subject, publishing and broad-casting little educative pamphlets and I was holding large women meetings in support of my work in the Council. To the credit of the Indian public it must be said, that very soon the vocal public became converted to my creed, I had reports of meetings held everywhere in the Presidency in favour of my bill before the 'Council, indivi-

duals began to attack my opponents through the press, the vernacular and the English press took up my side and above all owing to the wonderful awakening that has come upon all communities, particularly, those castes that have been victims of this Devadasi evil, I very soon came into touch with the reformed sections of those communities who have since done much to further my work in that direction and who are even now carrying on intensive propaganda to uproot this evil. I shall refer to this most important legislation of mine later on when the discussion on my bill is referred to in this book.

VII

EXEMPTION OF POOR GIRLS FROM THE PAYMENT OF SCHOOL FEES

DURING that very same session, my other resolution on fee remission for poor girls in schools was in the agenda under the name of another hon. Member Rao Sahib L.C. Guruswami. To get the resolution successfully through the ballot, we would get it signed by a number of hon. Members, if the Members should be willing to sign the resolution as one hon. member is entitled only to have one motion through the ballot, for one session. As myself had the resolution for the prevention of Dedication of minor girls to Temples, I could not have another to myself during that term. But my friend Rao Sahib, L.C. Guruswami came to my help, was good enough to move the resolution and also to make an impressive speech while I had to be satisfied with seconding it.

“ Mr. President, Sir, with great pleasure I rise to support the resolution, because, as you know, our experience has shown and the report of the Special Educational Officer, Mr. Statham, also shows that the education of girls, especially of Indian Girls, is very backward. I am of opinion that better facilities should be created for the promotion of female education till at last the percentage of school-going girls may reach the level of that of the boys.

The figures as furnished by Mr. Statham, the Special Educational Officer, are as follows : —

BOYS

Primary Schools.....8. 8 per cent.

GIRLS

2.3 per cent of the total population.

Again while 83 boys per 10,000 receive the benefit of higher education, only 8 girls per 10,000 have that advantage.

As is revealed by the above figures and as admitted by the educational officer himself, the education of girls is very backward and the reason for such a condition is not far to seek.

Even though the importance and the necessity of girls' education to the country's progress is now recognised on all sides, still we are too deeply conscious that parents—even rich parents—while they will liberally and willingly spend any amount of money upon their boys' education, the majority of the very same parents will grudge to pay a few rupees as fees every month to their daughters, because, Sir, at any rate in this country, education is sought for by the majority of the people, not for its own sake, not for the culture and enlightenment which true education confers upon individual men or women, but is sought for as a qualification to compete for Government posts carrying big salaries, so much so parents rightly think that as girls are not going to be wage-earners the money spent upon their education will be a mere waste. So they will load their sons-in-law with diamond ear-rings and gold watches and their daughters with rich dowries, rather than spend that money on educating their daughters and thus making them fit to successfully face the battle of life, rather than

making them good and prudent housewives, loyal wives and educated mothers.

I understand Sir, from the educational officer's report and the recommendations of all those interested in the cause of education that very soon the system of free and compulsory education will be introduced into this Presidency.

In that case, also, I ask only for a little concession, i.e., in the case of girls after the completion of the primary standard which is—I form, two more forms II and III, may be made free, because when girls finish their primary education they are only 8 or 9 years old, and are too young to think or act for themselves and I know many parents, whether rich or poor, especially in the mofussil stop their girls from attending schools even at that age.

Now if II and III forms are made free, by the time they finish III form they will be older—may be 12 or, 13 when a real taste for studies will be created in those who have got the aptitude for study, when they may even bring pressure upon their parents to send them to schools.

As I have mentioned before, only 8 girls per 10,000 receive the benefit of higher education. Under such a state of affairs no wonder there is a dearth of good and well qualified women teachers for girl's schools.

Now we have been granted franchise. I already feel from my experience of these few months in the Council that much good work can be done if women of education, real culture, knowledge and character take up public work. As it is, our graduates that pass out of their colleges are being absorbed into the Educational and Medical departments. The Government rules are so strict that the service people are tongue-tied and women

in service cannot express even their social grievances and demand for laws and reforms. They cannot even appeal for money on behalf of any philanthropic and social organization—say, maternity and child-welfare, flood-relief, temperance, orphanages, etc. When I look round for help and sympathy for any of the above nation-building and even relief measures, the educated free women are so few that I have to lament in despair at our sad plight. The experience of other countries also has shown that women are admirably fitted for any kind of social work. In Australia, Germany, America, England and Wales, the educated women have shown wonderful records of work and in no small measure have contributed to the country's happiness, health, well-being and prosperity. If the maternal and infantile mortality has come down by 50 per cent in England and Wales, it is due to those selfless and devoted women who work at the various maternity and child-welfare centres, and if tuberculosis and social disease in those countries have become reduced by 50 per cent again, it is due to the extensive educative propaganda work done by the enlightened women of those countries. If England and America could boast of such well-conducted orphanages for their poor and destitute children, societies and schools for the blind, deaf and backward children, of so many maternity and children's homes, day nurseries for children, in fact almost all the social and philanthropic associations that exist to help the poor, the sick, the infirm, the lowly and the depressed, are due to the active interest and intelligent co-operation of the cultured women of those countries.

Here in India also there is much need for social work on the above lines. We need any number of educated women volunteers to help and supervise the

maternity and child-welfare centres, to visit the women prisoners in the jails, the sick patients in the hospitals and to run the orphanages for girls on the right lines ; we want the right kind of women as nurses, health visitors, mid-wives and we have yet to start well-organised beggar homes wherein the able-bodied beggar will be made to work for his good and the really deserving ones will be fed at the public cost.

Again, we want women of real culture and experience of Indian conditions to serve on committees such as the committee for the protection of children, Tondiarpet, and the temperance and the vigilance committees, and who would not accept, if there were enough number of educated women in the country, all these various social and philanthropic organizations could be managed by women, who by nature are endowed with those precious qualities of head and heart that are essential to be a successful and loving care-taker of the young, the sick and the old. Such division of labour would surely benefit our country as it has done in other civilized countries

No doubt boys as the future wage-earners have to be trained for making a living, but who would deny that it is the woman that should render his life worth living, make him comfortable and happy, and more than that, is even responsible for the training of the young minds, the future citizens, fathers, statesmen, reformers and philanthropists.

As is so very well expressed by the Great poet:

‘ She stays all the young planet in her hands ; if she be small, slight natured, and miserable, how shall men grow ? ’ Where would Sivaji be without his mother ?

So, everyone will have to admit that our indivi-

dual and national progress is very much retarded owing to the ignorance and backwardness of our women.

"Again, Sir, I may impress upon you this, my conviction that only when every Indian mother is given the right kind of education and is educated as to the real needs of the nation, when she is endowed not only with the power of producing healthy physique but also a healthy mind in her children, when every mother, while she develops the bodies of her children, nurses their minds also with the great nation-building ideals such as national unity, love and service to the country, self-sacrifice and self-denial—qualities that will constitute a great and free nation—then only India will become great, India will become free and honoured among the free nations in the world. At least to hasten that period, I most respectfully urge upon the educational authorities to give effect to this resolution."

The resolution after being slightly amended by the Council was finally accepted in this form.

"This Council recommends to the Government that the Madras Educational Rules be modified to the effect that poor girls reading in any educational institution, Government, local fund, municipal or aided, be exempted from payment of school-fees in any standard up to III form."

The above is only one of the many instances of willing help and sympathetic and ready co-operation, I had experienced from the hands of my brother-councillors.

The Government, the very next year, had made provision in the budget for the fee

concession and had issued a G.O. to the benefit of many poor girls in the Presidency.

Through frequent interpellations in the Council, I urged also for the sanction of poor scholarships so as to enable the poor girls of all communities to have the benefit of higher education. We are thankful to Government that in 1929 Budget, provision for an increased number of such scholarships has been made.

VIII

MY INTEREST IN SOCIAL HYGIENE

HAVING come across a large percentage of venereal cases in the course of my medical practice and having found that the facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of such cases in our Presidency were almost nil, I brought the matter to the notice of the Council. Absence of facilities for the middle class people and the poor and the prohibitive cost of treatment for such virulent diseases had been for many years troubling my mind. In spite of the delicacy of the subject, I made bold to address the Government and also to read a paper before the members of the South Indian Medical Union on the need for an anti-venereal campaign in Madras even as early as 1924.

The following is an extract from that paper : —

“ Before I begin the subject proper, I like to explain why of all people, I should have thought it proper to speak to you on this question of Venereal Diseases. For some time past, I have been oppressed by a feeling that patients whether rich or poor when they go through a private practitioner have to pay Rs. 32 for a Wassermann reaction to be done.

So, I wrote a few lines explaining the necessity of the test for a large number of people in our country and

asking the Government for the total abolition or reduction of the fee in the interest of public health. The following is an extract from the letter that I addressed the Government:—

“Medical profession knows that Wassermann test is a very invaluable one to prove the presence or absence of latent syphilitic infection in the human body and we know what a ravaging and destructive disease syphilis is ; in spite of its dangerous and deadly nature, only a small percentage of people suffering from this ailment think of seeking hospital treatment. It is a plain and painful truth that very many of the poor and the middle classes do not relish the idea of being in-patients in the hospital. In most cases men being the wage-earners of the family, cannot afford to be away from their work even for a limited period and the women have to look after their family, their husband and children.

At present this important test is done only at the Government Guindy Institute and at the Research Laboratory, Mount Road and the charge for the test varies from Rs 20 to 32 for a private person which I think is rather a heavy one for anybody except to a rich few.”

This letter I sent to the Secretary of the South Indian Medical Union to be placed before the members of that Union for their united opinion in such an important matter. The Secretary approved of the letter but at the same time suggested that I may as well read a paper on the whole question of the Venereal Diseases in this Presidency, which I readily undertook to do.

My paper was very much appreciated by the members of the Union and it was also fully published in all the local press. The very next year, that is 1925, I left for England for my Post-Graduate study where I attended the Imperial Congress of Social Hygiene held at Wembley

in October 1925. I was also present at a conference of delegates both Indian and European, which met under the chairmanship of Lord Willingdon (who has just then returned to England after his full period of Governorship in Bombay and Madras) to discuss about the programme of the delegation that was to visit India the following winter. I was invited to that conference and I availed myself of that occasion to present a paper on the incidence of venereal disease in India to the members, a short extract of which is quoted below:—

“In spite of its wide prevalence and in spite of its dangerous far-reaching consequences, this question has not been seriously thought of by the local authorities and by the public. Of course, the public is under the strong fortress of ignorance about the serious nature of the disease, but the apathy of the public health authorities cannot be accounted for.

For the whole city of Madras, there is only one Bacteriological Laboratory at Guindy, a Government Institute which charges Rupees Thirtytwo or nearly 2½ pounds in the English coin for a single Wasserman test if wanted by a private practitioner.

In a poor country like India, how prohibitive the cost of private treatment of such diseases must be for a middle class patient, with repeated Wasserman tests, the cost of up-to-date medicines and the fee for the doctor, however moderate it may be.

As for the treatment facilities in hospitals, in only one hospital, that is the Madras Medical College General Hospital, there is a separate Venereal ward with a few beds, in charge of a specially trained medical officer, even which, I learnt before I left India, is not sufficiently equipped with up-to-date appliances.”

At that conference in London I made the

acquaintance of Mrs. Rolfe, the Lady Member and I promised her that I would organise women's meeting in Madras to hear her on that subject. Accordingly, they arrived in Madras in December 1926 and I was put on the local committee to arrange her programme.

I feel glad to state that the Indian delegation has done splendid work by arousing the public and the authorities as to the urgency of the problem through lectures, through the distribution of pamphlets on that subject, through conference with social workers and medical people and through demonstrations with their cinema films and after thoroughly surveying the conditions here, they have published their reports with their valuable recommendations for the control of the disease. This short history will account for my persistent efforts in the Council to secure proper facilities for the public for the prevention and cure of those virulent diseases.

Soon after my entry into the Local Council, I took up this question in right earnest. Not only did I refer to this important subject in my Budget speech of 1927, but also I put the following interpellations :

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state :

(a) If the Government is aware of the findings of

the members of the British Social Hygiene Council, and the suggestions made by them for combating venereal disease in this Presidency ;

(b) If the answer to question (a) be in the affirmative, whether the Government is going to take prompt action on the lines suggested by the members of the delegation ;

(c) Whether the Government as a preliminary has reduced the fee or abolished it altogether (the fee now being Rs. 32) for Wasserman blood test for syphilis, when the blood specimen is sent by a private practitioner to the Government Laboratory ;

(d) Whether the Government is aware of the fact that such a test is done at state cost in Great Britain and other civilised countries to facilitate treatment and cure of such ravaging diseases ;

(e) If so, will the Government be pleased to take immediate steps to abolish the fee in the interest of public health ;

(f) Whether it is a fact that in Great Britain and other civilised countries, the drugs for such diseases are supplied free of charge to private practitioners for treating their patients suffering from such diseases ;

(g) If the answer to the question (f) be in the affirmative will the Government be pleased to consider the desirability of introducing such a system in this Presidency ?

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state :

(a) the number of the in and out female patients that attended the General and other Government hospitals in the City of Madras for the treatment of venereal diseases during the year 1926 ;

(b) whether any attempt was made to appoint a woman medical officer to look after such women patients in those hospitals ;

(c) if the answer to clause (b) be in the negative, whether the Government be pleased to take immediate steps for the appointment of female medical officers for the purpose ?

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state :

(1) whether the report of the British Social Hygiene Council Delegation has been received and if so, when ;

(2) When the Government propose to publish the the Report for the information of the public ; and

(3) whether the Government be pleased to place on the table of the House a copy of the Report sent to the Local Government by the British Social Hygiene Council Delegation.

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state:

With reference to the answer given to clause (c) of Q. 558 asked at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 18th October 1927 :—

(i) whether the Government do not consider that adequate facilities should be created for the treatment of women patients suffering from venereal diseases by women doctors in all the hospitals as obtained even in European countries ; and such facilities would induce a large number of female patients to seek early treatment for such serious ailments ;

(ii) whether the Government¹ do not consider it

hard that the female patients suffering from such diseases in the areas served by the Royapuram and the General Hospitals should be asked to undertake a journey to the Victoria Caste and Gosha hospital or to the hospitals for women and children, Egmore situated at a distance for treatment ;

(iii) whether the Government consider that women medical officers if appointed to be in charge of venereal clinics will not be able to train the students as well as the men doctors can do ;

(iv) whether the Government would reconsider its decision in view of the importance of the matter ?

1. (a) Is the hon. the Minister for Public Health aware that the incidence of Venereal Disease in this Presidency according to the report of Dr. Lees and Mrs. Rolfe is high ?

(b) if the answer to (a) be in the affirmative will the hon. the Minister be pleased to state whether their immediate recommendation has been given effect to ?

2. Will the hon. the Minister be pleased to state :

(a) if he has any scheme to train a certain number of men and women medical graduates by the newly imported Venereal specialist to effectively administer this kind of medical relief throughout the Presidency ?

(b) if he is aware that the majority of the Indian women prefer treatment by women to men especially when suffering from this particular ailment, not only in India but also in other European countries ?

(c) if the answer to (b) be in the affirmative, will he be pleased to state if separate provision (separate accommodation and women staff) has been made in the General Hospital and other hospitals in the Presidency for the treatment of the women patients suffering from Venereal Diseases ?

3. Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state :

(a) if there is any women medical officer for the out-patient department of the General Hospital to look after the needs of all the women out-patients ?

(b) if the answer to (a) be in the negative, will he consider the desirability of employing one for the benefit of the women out-patients in that hospital as well as in other General Hospitals that admit women patients ?

4. (a) is the hon. the Minister for Public Health aware that the Indian Delegation strongly recommended that Government should make financial provisions for all equipments, as films, literature, projectors and operators, used throughout the country for the purposes of public enlightenment and the Madras Social Hygiene Council be deputed to do that work ?

(b) if the answer to (a) be in the affirmative will he consider the desirability of sanctioning liberal grants so that the Council may carry on propaganda throughout the Presidency more effectively ?

5. Is the hon. the Home Member aware that the Indian delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council recommended that two trained police women should be obtained from England to train educated Indian women in police and protective work among women and children, and to handle police cases involving women and children and if the answer be in the affirmative, will he be pleased to state if the recommendation has ever been considered, and if so with what result ?

6. Is the hon. the Minister for Education aware (a) that the Indian delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council has made certain recommendations regarding revision of the syllabus for the secondary and

primary Grade teachers so as to include Public Health and Social Hygiene ;

(b) that the same delegation has recommended as an immediate measure to send 4 trained teachers, two men and two women, on Government Scholarships for a year's qualifying course on Social Hygiene at one of the European Universities ; and

(c) if the answer be in the affirmative, will he be pleased to state if the above recommendation has been considered, and if so, with what result ?

I now record with joy that the Wasserman test fee has been abolished for the poor people. Venereal clinic has been opened in the General Hospital under a specialist and a lady doctor has been appointed in the General Hospital to look after women patients. Even though there is much to be done in this country before we achieve even one-fourth of the good results that has been obtained in other progressive countries, still we have to thank the Government for the beginning they have made in the right direction to combat this very serious menace to health and life. Of course, I do not claim the credit for the results—but it gladdens my heart to feel that at least some of my hopes have been realised. I must admit, no doubt that we have touched in this country, only a fringe of that vast problem.

IX WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Sree Sarada Niketan

IT was brought to my knowledge that the Adult Women's Institute in Guntur which was doing very good work had not been permitted to receive the grant that was sanctioned by the adjacent municipalities towards its expenditure and I immediately felt that I should ask the Government their reason for the same.

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that the Sree Sarada Niketan, Guntur, is a residential institution for girls to promote the higher education of girls both literary and vocational ;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the decision of the Municipalities of Guntur, Bezwada and Ellore, the District Boards of Kistna, West Godavari and Vizagapatam and the Taluq Board of Divi and Gannavaram to make grants to the Sree Sarada Niketan, or the Women's Home of Service, Guntur ;

(c) whether the said Local Bodies have applied to the Local Government for their approval of their sanction of such grants ;

(d) if the answer to clause (c) be in the affirmative, when ?

(e) if they are going to give effect to the new

G. O. enabling the Local Bodies to give grants to unrecognised institutions conducted on national lines,

(f) whether the hon. the Minister would expedite the matter?

The hon. Minister was good enough to allow the grant.

The Madras Seva-Sadan

It would be of interest to the public to know that the present Madras Seva Sadan had its origin in the Old Women's Home of Service in the Udayavanam, Royapettah High Road and our expenditure then amounted to nearly Rs. 7000—while the Government grant was only Rs. 700—and we applied for educational grant, which was refused by the Department.

Therefore I moved the following resolution in the Council on the 24th January 1928 :

' This Council recommends to the Government to sanction a special and liberal grant to the Women's Home of Service, Mylapore, which is conducting adult education on National lines for destitute women of the Presidency and which is training them to become self-supporting.'

" Mr. President, the Women's Home of Service was started with the object of promoting adult education among women and making them self-reliant and self-supporting and thus enabling them to earn an honourable living. It was started in the year 1923 by the Women's Indian Association. It has done four years of useful work. It has got a good record and if

hon. Members take the trouble of going through the report, they will be favourably impressed with the work done by the Home. It has got at present 15 resident scholarship students. The scholarships are given from the funds received from the public and from the Women's Indian Association. The classes there are mostly vocational. The teachers give them lessons in vernaculars and in English and music and religion is also taught. Most of the time of the pupils is taken up by the vocational classes such as lace-making, embroidery, weaving and spinning. Last year articles worth about Rs. 2000 were made there. In addition to the instruction given regularly in classes, 50 grown up girls and women residents in the neighbourhood, daily come and attend the classes and earn about 4 annas per day.

Again, Sir, as there is sufficient accommodation, it serves also as a hostel for teachers and medical students who come from the mofussil. Hon. Members may know that in Madras, we are very badly in need of a hostel for women who come from the mofussils. Except the Young Women's Christian Association hostel there are no hostels for girls in Madras. It may be said that there is the Medical College Hostel. But it accommodates medical Students only.

"Again, Sir, the Women's Home has got a baby welcome attached to it. Last year they gave medical help to 90 babies per day. The annual report shows that 30,000 cases were given baths and attended to for minor ailments. Expectant mothers of the locality are attended to by the nurse in charge of the baby welcome. Many distinguished visitors had opportunities of visiting the Home. One such distinguished visitor and social worker is the late lamented Sanyasi Swamy Sharadha-

nandaji. With the permission of the house I will just read to the House his opinion of the work done by the Home. 'The work done by the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin ladies sitting side by side with the Panchama girls and working out the future of India gives me the greatest delight. If a Sanyasi's benediction can be of any use to an institution of this kind it has my heartiest sympathy'. He is one of the distinguished men who visited the Home and his opinion will speak for itself. The management of the Home is in the hands of the Officers of the Women's Indian Association and it has a strong advisory committee composed of women of all castes and creeds. The Corporation has been good enough to give a grant of Rs. 1500 and Child Welfare Association about Rs. 800. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the need for a home of this kind. Owing to our peculiar social condition many women in their young age between the ages of 15 and 30 are helpless either because they are widows or are deserted by their husbands and relatives. In a poverty stricken country such as ours, you can imagine their hardship. Sometimes there are women with a number of children to look after. So I think one home is not sufficient ; but we want tens of such Homes.

"Sir, in the Women's Home, some are trained as maternity nurses, some as vocational teachers and some others as music teachers. If they should get some special grant from the Government many such women may be trained as teachers, mid-wives and music and vocational instructors. As we want to conduct the Home on the line of the Poona Seva Sadan Society, Bombay which has got an international reputation we need the special grant. There are similar Homes being started by Indian ladies at Triplicane and there is one in the Andhra Desa called the Sarada Niketan and the

local body of the place has been good enough to make grants to it. But it has not yet obtained the approval of the hon. Minister for Education for making that grant, the grant that has been so freely given by the local body.....

"I may point out that the Government of Bombay, Bengal and Mysore have been helping similar institutions very liberally and so I humbly submit that this resolution may be given effect to."

Mr. A. B. Shetty and Mr. Saldana strongly supported me but as the hon. Minister did not accept the resolution I made the following reply.

"Sir, it is already mentioned in the resolution that a special grant may be given, because the institution cannot come under the category of recognised institutions as they are admitting women between the ages of 15 and 30. The Government have to consider the special circumstances of the case and go upon that. Moreover, there has been a Government Order passed that unrecognised institutions in the mofussil may be given grants by the local bodies. The Governments of Bombay and Mysore are doing so. I cannot understand why our Government should not give similar help. Sir, such grants would help the education of women. In our Presidency literacy among women is only 2%. If the Government want to promote adult education on national lines and without much cost to them, such

help should be given to institutions of this kind."

The hon. Dr. Subbarayan:—"I am as anxious as my Hon'ble friend the Deputy President, that the literacy among the womenfolk of the Province should be raised higher than it is today. But, as I said before, the Government cannot afford to help any institution merely because of their good intentions. If the Women's Home of Service, Mylapore, want a grant, they should make out a case for a grant being given, and then the Government will consider whether such a grant should be given."

The Hon'ble the President then put the resolution to vote and declared lost. Myself demanding a poll, the result was 44 voting for the motion and 16 against. The Congress, the Justicites and even a few of the ministerialists voted for the motion, showing their full sympathy with such a useful institution.

Again, when the demand for 'Industries' came before the Council in the year 1928, I raised this question again.

"Mr. President, Sir I should like to say a few words on the usefulness of Industrial Homes for Women, one of which is located in Mylapore. It gives not only protection, free boarding, lodging to a number of widows and destitute women, but it also trains them to very useful professions. They are engaged in hand-spinning, hand weaving, rattan work, lace, embroidery, sewing, music, etc., and the inmates are thus trained as vocational teachers. And

now that we are going to introduce vocational training in our schools, these women teachers will be very useful as teachers in Government schools. This institution is open to all castes and creeds. They are not only made self-supporting and self-reliant but also made to be useful to the community. I am very glad to find in the budget there is a provision made for Rs. 1,500 for scholarships for Adi Dravida girls intended to be trained in this Home. Now the expenses of the institute comes to nearly Rs. 20,000 and hon. Members will remember that in the year 1927 a resolution was moved in this Council urging upon Government to give liberal grants to the Women's Home of Service. The same Home has been developed into the Seva Sadan and is running on these lines, that is, giving much attention to the industrial training rather than to educational. Now nothing has been done so far and the resolution has not been given effect to. But I heard from the superintendent that there is a provision for giving them Rs. 1200 from the industrial Department. So I request the Government to see that this very useful institution is helped with a substantial sum because the women trained in this institution will go out to the villages as missionary workers. The inmates learn a true spirit of service under such a management and they are much better than the women who are trained in other Government institutions. The workers being all honorary, the inmates live in an atmosphere which conduces to the development of the spirit of service, love for one another and love for humanity which are qualities essential for a missionary. Hence such Homes run by voluntary agencies should be encouraged. Our aim is to develop similar institutions in all our districts. So I most respectfully urge on the authorities to give a liberal grant to the Madras Seva Sadan.

As nothing was done till the year 1929 I had to remind the Council of their verdict on that resolution of mine through the follow-ed interpellations.

Question

Will the hon'ble the Minister for education and the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state if any action has been taken on the resolution passed by a large majority in this Council on 21-8-28, to sanction a special and liberal grant to the then Women's Home of Service, Mylapore, (the present Madras Seva Sadan).

II. If the answer be in the negative, will the hon. the Ministers state the reasons for the same?

III. Are the hon. the Ministers aware that this Cosmopolitan Institution since 21-1-28 has grown rapidly both in its strength of pupils, in its popularity and in its usefulness to the public?

If the answer be in the affirmative, will the hon. the Ministers see their way to carry out the verdict of this Council through a supplementary grant this year?

We are grateful to Government that the present Madras Seva Sadan has not only been given a liberal building grant but is also in receipt of other grants as well.

To introduce bills and to get them passed into law involved enormous labour. To question the Government for eliciting information and to move resolutions on the floor of the Council, correct and accurate details, facts and figures were first essentials to success. Even if one statement should turn out to be incorrect, our case would be weakened

as the Government would be ready to face us with their facts and figures. While the information that the Government members needed, would be supplied to them by their respective offices, we members had to go about seeking for the same, which very often mean considerable time and labour. To strengthen my case, I had to refer to many an old and new publication on the subject, not only here in India, but also to recent literature from the West.

My stay in England for one year and my delegation to the World's Conference of Women which was held in Paris in June 1926 has brought me in touch with many able women workers and useful women institutions from whom I have been receiving many valuable literature on Health, Education and Moral and Social Hygiene for which I cannot but be too grateful to those good and noble women of other climes. Owing to my position in the Council I was asked to serve on many a Committee, Health and Welfare Committees, Temperance Committees, Vigilance Committee, Social Hygiene, Social Reform, and Social Service Committees in addition to my serving on purely Women Committees such as the Women Indian Association, the Muslim Ladies' Association, the Seva-sadan, Children Aid Society etc. Still I continue on those Committees as much good, quiet and useful work could be done through those Commit-

tees. All the new publications on the current problems of the day were sent to me for review and opinion and as a matter of course, I had to read all the dailies both in vernacular and in English to be in touch with the views of all parties in the country.

In addition I had to participate in many meetings, to enlist public sympathy and support for my bills and resolutions. I was asked to preside over many public functions in the city which I could not refuse and I had also invitations from District Associations to which I responded whenever I had leisure. Further I had not only to be writing to the Press to educate the public but also had to organise large women's meetings in support of my social and moral reform measures. I had to correspond with social and missionary workers in the districts. My correspondence increased to an enormous extent as I had letters from England, Geneva, America, France in addition to local and provincial correspondence.

Now I realised in full the responsibility of the office I was holding in the Council, and the very consciousness that I was able to render some service to my country always kept me happy and cheerful.

With the month of March 1928, our Budget came. As I have learnt all the technics by this time, having made a careful study of the Budget and having taken notes of all

points I wanted to raise before the Council, I made the following speech during the general discussion of the 1928 Budget.

“ Mr. President, I congratulate the hon. the Finance Member on the very lucid and thorough manner in which he has presented this budget. I thank him for all the new schemes of increased expenditure he has provided in the coming Year's budget. The items that give me most delight are those that relate to the Women's education and the extension of medical relief. The provisions in the budget for the construction of a science block in the Queen Mary's College, the introduction of Indian Music into the Queen Mary's College curriculum of studies, the opening of vocational training classes in the Lady Wellington Training College and the establishment of a physical training course under a physical culture specialist in the latter College, the grant for opening of more primary and secondary schools for girls are all highly gratifying but I feel sorry to note that, in spite of my interpellations and the repeated demands from the Principal of the Lady Wellington College, there is no provision made even in this year's budget for a better accommodation for girls attending the Lady Wellington College. Now the girls are living in two hostels both situated in the congested parts of Triplicane. The Christian and Adi-Dravida Hostel is situated in the Akbar Sahib Street which some of the hon. Members who might have passed by that side of Triplicane would have noticed to be the most insanitary and the most crowded street in Triplicane. From the answer to my interpellations I find that the Government consider the place sufficiently sanitary and the best spot in Triplicane, but as a medical I beg to differ. The other hostel is in Big Street which is an old Indian-styled building housing 40

to 50 inmates. I have several times drawn the attention of the Government to the fact that there is no other hostel in the whole city for girls who come from the mofussils seeking secondary and higher education in the absence of similar schools in the mofussils. I submit therefore that a good decent hostel is a very urgent necessity especially for the girls studying in the Lady Willingdon College, because, Sir, our girls suffer under so many disadvantages, their movements are very much limited, they do not enjoy as much freedom as our boys and except the school hours they have to spend all their time inside such hostels which do not satisfy the modern hygienic and sanitary needs of a healthy living place. So I respectfully urge upon the attention of the authorities the need for finding without any further delay a building-site and putting up a hostel for the lady students so that it may serve as a model hostel for the future hostels of the Presidency."

Again Sir, I do not find any provision for the expansion and additions to the Lady Willingdon College even though the Principal in her annual report has pointed out the urgent need for such expansion in view of the fact that the college gives training for all the elementary, secondary and L.T. teachers to serve the whole Presidency. Now coming to the education of girls in general the report of the Director itself says (in the quinquennium report for 1922-27) the present education of girls is very backward as compared with that of the boys. From 1922 to 1927 while the percentage of boys receiving instruction increased by 2.5 per cent the percentage of girls increased by .7 per cent only. The report further says 'that when educational facilities are offered for girls, there is generally a quick response on the part of parents and the public.' The supply of

trained women teachers is still inadequate, but the lack of trained women teachers has been more due to the absence of facilities for training than the difficulty of securing candidates, so that the report of the Director of Public Instruction belies the statement of Miss Mayo—that no Indian woman would come forward to be trained as teachers and that the parents would not send their girls to schools. We see now it is the absence of educational facilities that is the chief hindrance to the rapid progress of women's education in this Presidency. So, I urge that more money should be spent upon the girl's education and special attention as stated in Mr. Statham's report has to be bestowed on the expansion and the development of the women's education.

I plead also for the opening of more training centres for female teachers and the institution of special scholarships for girls of the depressed and backward communities. Last year there were 30 applicants for admission to the non-Brahmin hostel for scholarships and these included several Adi-Dravida girls. They had to be refused admission for want of scholarships. Further the scholarship given by the Labour Commissioner for Adi-Dravida girls is from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7. The girls coming from the mofussil have necessarily to board in a hostel. Adi-Dravida girls seeking higher education come from all parts of the Presidency. They cannot prosecute their studies and meet their expenses with this sum of Rs. 3 to 7. At least Rs. 15 will be needed for their boarding and lodging. We have issued an appeal to the Labour Commissioner on behalf of the depressed class girls to be kind enough to increase the amount of scholarship and make them residential scholarships.

“Muhammadan girls' education is still in a backward state and the exclusion of Muhammadan women

from the system of compulsory education that was introduced three months ago in the city will prove a serious obstacle to the progress of that community. What I see around here is that our brothers interest themselves in many things other than women's education and medical relief for women and children. Our Adi-Dravida brothers also stress more upon other grievances than the education of their girls. I would like them to remember that if they want to become independent, self-reliant and healthy they must look to their women first, because it is the home that is the best and first school for the acquirement of such high qualities.

"Again, Sir, to stimulate the demand for higher education both among the Muhammadan and the backward depressed community girls a few special residential scholarships should be instituted in the Queen Mary's College. As I have already pressed upon the attention of the hon. Minister through interpellations, a hostel for Muhammadan girls studying in the Hobart Training School for Muhammadan girls is very essential considering that it is the only secondary training school in the whole Presidency for muslim girls.

Coming to the medical, I am pleased to note the provision for the construction of a Tuberculosis Hospital for this city, for the provision of a home and the starting of industries for the incurable leper cases in Tirumani, for the appointment of a venereal specialist in the General Hospital and the purchase of drugs and other equipment etc., for a separate venereal department in the General Hospital and the provision for the taking over under the Government management of a number of women and children mofussil hospitals.

Regarding the construction of the Tuberculosis Hospital I have a word to say. No doubt the hospital is

very essential but I beg to submit that it may be located away from the habitations of the people around such places as Egmore, Pudupet, Komaleswaranpet, Vepery and Purasawalkam as the location of the hospital in the Spur Tank may deprive the children of the neighbourhood of their playground and a healthy recreation spot in the absence of any open park in that area.

I should like if permitted to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the very inadequate maternity service now existing in the rural parts, while 80 per cent of our Western sisters today enjoy the benefit of trained help at the time of child-birth, it is a most painful fact that not even 3 per cent of our women in the villages get that advantage. Our mothers at a most critical time in their lives are entrusted to the care of an ignorant and unclean barber midwife with very sad consequences. Under the rural schemes, the subsidy given by the Government to the midwife is only Rs. 10, a very poor compensation ; while the Corporation midwives in the city get a salary of Rs. 40 to 50, the midwives under the rural scheme who cannot get a pie extra from the poor starving villagers, is paid such a low salary. Hence I am of opinion, Sir, that to attract the midwives from the city to the villages, the pay must be adequate and thus the services of trained midwives must be made available to the suffering women in the villages. I may also point out to the hon. Minister that the local village people have not yet come to realize the value of trained and scientific midwifery as they have been used all these years to the barber midwives whose fee varies from four annas to a rupee or a measure of paddy ; if this is not possible with our present finance, I would urge the speedy inauguration of the Dais Scheme in every district in this Presidency as it has produced very good results in

Hyderabad and Sindh (Northern India) and in Simla so that our women may be spared from the sufferings and other disabilities that attend child-birth in this unfortunate land. I may submit also for your kind consideration that maternity service is the best service in any country and it should be the first charge on the finance of any country.

Again Sir, as Indian women prefer women to men to attend on the child-birth and as every year women medical graduates are increasing in this Presidency, I feel very strongly that maternity and child-welfare works must be largely done by women. Even in other countries where women enjoy so much freedom and education, maternity and child-welfare work is done mostly by women. It must be more so here in India where women may even prefer death to being attended to by men during child-birth. Further I am of opinion, Sir, that our women graduates should be provided with facilities in every maternity hospital for a practical course in midwifery and gynaecological work and the Government should see that every medical graduate gets a period of post-graduate training before she is employed for the mofussil hospitals and dispensaries because midwifery is an emergency work and good and successful midwifery depends upon the experience and skill of the practising doctor.

Again Sir, when I put interpellations asking for an appointment of a lady doctor in Government General Hospital to look after the women patients suffering from venereal diseases, the answer was that there was no urgency for such an appointment. I have a great mind to question that statement because I firmly believe that it is the presence of facilities that attract the patients to the hospitals and as we understand, from the report of

Dr. Lees and Mrs. Rolfe that a large percentage of our men and women are suffering from that disease and as even in other countries for special work like this women are chosen to attract women to such places of treatment it is very necessary in the interest of the suffering, innocent women and in regard to their feelings in this matter that in every venereal clinic for men and women a woman doctor, when available, should be preferably appointed to look after the women patients suffering from such diseases.

As for the necessity for a separate special hospital for children in the city of Madras, I learn from the budget that only departments for children are going to be opened in connection with Maternity Hospital, Egmore, and the Government Victoria Caste and Gosha hospital, while the resolution stands for a separate special hospital of primary importance and not for one of secondary grade. However much I approve of the scheme that in a maternity hospital there should be provision for anti-natal, intra-natal and post-natal work, so that the students may follow up the cases from the expectant mother to the post-natal period of the infant and the mother, I feel very strongly still that for children below 12 years suffering from ailments peculiar to childhood special study and special attention is necessary so that independently of any maternity hospital research and study into children's diseases—diseases peculiar to this climate may be carried on by medical men and women who have got an aptitude and a taste for such a study, which proposal if necessary may be placed for further consideration before a medical committee composed of medical women both European and Indian, of some years' standing who are well acquainted with the ailments of our women and children."

We are sorry to state that the Government Hostel accommodation for girls attending the Lady Willingdon College is still inadequate and unsuitable, further I have been always opposed to denominational hostels for more than one reason and I feel strongly that housing pupils of one school in separate buildings according to their caste or creed surely would defeat the very object of education, the object of education being the individual realisation of the fundamental unity of life service and love to humanity. Not only did I stress the above views of mine in my budget speech, but also put several interpellations on the subject.

Question

(a) whether the Government are aware that the existing accommodation in the Non-Brahmin hostel is insufficient to meet the requirements of the hostel inmates and if the answer be in the affirmative whether the Government have under consideration any proposal for providing better hostel accommodation elsewhere ;

(b) whether the Government are aware that the Christian hostel attached to the Lady Willingdon Training College is not located either in a suitable place or in a suitable building from health point of view ;

(c) whether the Government have ever considered the desirability of removing the Christian hostel to a better locality ?

Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

(d) the provision for accommodation made for the

Adi-Dravida girls in the hostel attached to the Lady Willingdon Training College ;

(e) the number of applications for admission into the hostel during the year 1927-1928 received from the Adi Dravida girls, how many of them were admitted and how many rejected and for what reasons ;

(f) whether there are any applications to the Principal, Lady Willingdon College, from the Adi-Dravida girls for scholarships awarded this year to the depressed classes by the Labour department.

On Residential quarters for mofussil women teachers

Question

Will the hon the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state :

1. whether the Government are aware of the hardships caused to the women teachers working in the mofussil schools for want of suitable residential quarters and especially when they are single and transferred from place to place ;

2. if the answer to 1 be in the negative, will the Government consider the desirability of providing them with quarters in convenient localities ;

3. whether there is any residential hostel for Muhammadan girls attached to the Hobart School, Royapettah ;

4. if the answer to 3 be in the negative, if the Government propose to have one as early as possible ?

During the general discussion on the Budget every member is allowed to express his or her views on the budget at the end of which discussion the Government Members would reply to the individual Member's

criticisms on their administration. If the Members are not satisfied with the Government replies, they would give notice of *token cuts* to be moved on the particular demands when being brought before the Council so as to demonstrate to the Government their views on the administration of the several Government departments. Accordingly I also gave notice of the following motions but unfortunately owing to my sudden illness I was not able to move them that session, still I quote them to show how Education and Public Health interested me most at that time.

Motions on Education

I. To discuss the desirability of instituting a Diploma Course in Domestic Science in the Queen Mary's College for women, Madras.

II. To discuss the usefulness of alternative separate courses for women in the Secondary Schools for Girls ;

III. To discuss the desirability of providing quarters for women teachers in the villages ;

IV. To discuss the urgent need of a hostel for girls studying in the Lady Willingdon College and of further extension to the College itself ;

V. To discuss the desirability of giving liberal grants to institutions carrying on adult women education ;

VI. To urge the importance and the necessity of compulsory medical inspection in girls schools, both Primary and Secondary, and the provision of ample playgrounds for all girls schools ;

VII. To discuss the usefulness of Women representatives on school Committees and the District Educational Councils ;

VIII. To discuss the importance of religious and moral instruction in all schools ;

IX To point out the inadequacy of Secondary schools for girls especially Muslim girls in the District ;

X. To discuss the inadequacy of scholarships and stipends for girls going up for higher education.

Labour Department.

1. To point out the Department's indifference to the educational interests of Adi-Dravida girls.

Industry.

1. To support the industrial Homes for women with liberal grants.

Medical.

1. To discuss the necessity of a woman administrative medical officer among the Head-quarter staff.

2. To discuss the usefulness of employing Lady Assistant Surgeons, Lady Assistant Superintendents and Lady Resident Medical Officers in all the Lying-in hospitals throughout the Presidency.

3. To discuss the advisability of giving a post-graduate course in Midwifery and Gynaecology for every women medical graduate and L.M.P.

Public Health.

(a) To discuss the necessity for the establishment of a Health School for Training Health visitors.

(b) To discuss the desirability of having a senior woman medical officer on the Public Health Staff.

(c) To discuss the need of more Maternity and Child-Welfare Centres in the Districts.

(d) To discuss the inadequacy of Maternity relief in the Districts.

(e) To discuss the desirability of increasing the subsidies to rural practitioners and rural Mid-wives.

(f) To discuss the provision of facilities for the training of a large number of Mid-wives and Nurses.

(g) To point out to the Government the importance of propaganda on Social Hygiene matters.

(h) Training Venereal women specialists.

The following chapters will deal mainly with my efforts in the Council for the promotion of Moral and Social Reform.

LEGISLATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD-MARRIAGE

I WROTE to the Central Government for sanction to introduce my bill* for the prevention of child marriage into the local Council and His Excellency the Viceroy's Government sent it back with the remark that my bill might wait till the fate of Rao Bahadur Harbilas Sarda's bill was decided in the Assembly. Therefore I thought of another device to get the support of the local Council, for Sarda's bill in the assembly. I drafted a resolution, had it signed by a number of Brahmin and Non-Brahmin members and when ballotted it came in the name of Mr. Ramjee Rao, an Andhra Brahmin member.

As Mr. Ramjee Rao could speak only in Telugu he desired me to move the resolution and the House was good enough to give me permission to move.

"This Council recommends to the Government that they may be pleased to communicate to the Government of India that in the opinion of this Council legislation raising the marriageable age of boys and girls to at least 21 and 16 years respectively, is necessary."

N. B. Before I proceed further, I should like to point out to the public that the All India Conference of women in

* See Appendix.

all its sessions has been repeatedly asking the Government to Legislate against child marriage.

Copies of Child-Marriage pamphlets are available at the address given below *

I was suffering from a severe attack of influenza, still I attended the Council to speak on the resolution. The venerable gentleman Dewan Bahadur Kesava Pillai, Ex-Deputy President of the Council for whom I have a very high regard, warmly seconded me.

“Mr. President, Sir, I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution and I have got the greatest admiration for the lady Deputy President, who has come back here to day and has shown so much earnestness and spoken with such eloquence for a reform so much needed in our country. The hon. the Mover has spoken with knowledge and experience of the state of things in some quarters that it will be graceful to allow a lady to plead successfully for such a reform and I hope that all the gentlemen here will be chivalrous enough to support this motion.”

Many other hon. Members spoke supporting the motion; as usual, Government opposed the motion and the most surprising of all, the Ex-Minister Sir A. P. Patro spoke strongly against legislation to prevent child marriage; to which criticisms I felt *called upon to reply*.

Sir, As for the question of social legislation Government have been enacting measures to put down certain

* No. 6, Rundall's Road, Vepery, Madras.

evil social customs, *e.g.* the abolition of Sati, Infanticide and Widow remarriage act, Civil marriage act, etc. Therefore the question before the House is not whether the Government can undertake legislation of this kind or not, which question has been already settled once for all by the Legislative Assembly. The hon. Members may know that the hon. Harbilas Sarda's bill has been introduced, discussed and has been referred to the Select Committee; which committee has also submitted its report fixing the age for boys and girls at 18 and 14 respectively.

Now I am simply requesting this Council to communicate their views on this very vital matter through this local Government to the Central Government. So, Sir, we need not discuss the preliminary question whether it is wise on our part to ask Government to undertake social legislation.

The hon. Law Member says that Sati was a more serious evil and so Government could not but put it down with a firm hand—but my answer is that in my opinion and in the opinion of the leaders of our society child marriage is a much more serious crime because. Sir, the practice of Sati involved only a few minutes suffering, while by this custom of child marriage the girl child from the moment of her birth to her death undergoes one continuous life-long suffering as a child wife, as a child mother and very often as a child widow. So this is a very urgent and a very important measure from the national point of view as it concerns the health and happiness of millions of our girls and the welfare of the future race. If widow remarriage act had not been enacted even the few widow remarriages could not have taken place. I may point out also to the House that a number of Native States as Baroda, Bharatpur, Kashmir, Kotah, Gondol and Rajkot have given the lead in this

matter having already enacted laws prohibiting early marriage in their States. The progressive countries in the world as Turkey, Egypt and Japan have not hesitated to enact laws to put down such pernicious social customs. When such is the case, I cannot understand why the Government should hesitate to give us the law that we need so much—a Government too that has seen the good effect of adult marriage in their country.

Every social evil, in this blessed country goes in the name of religion. What is custom after all? If any practice is observed for a few years owing to the exigencies of the times it becomes sanctified as a custom. So, let not the Government be frightened into inaction by the cry that religion is in danger. I may submit, here, that the society has derived no benefit at all from the Age of Consent Bill, because Sir, as the Hindu law allows polygamy, the parent of the girl dare not refuse to send the girl to her husband's house when he demands her for fear that the boy may be remarried.

As for social reform work and the education of the public we have been doing effective propaganda work all these fifty or sixty years and still the progress is very little. I have now figures on hand to show that early marriages are rather on the increase throughout India. If the Government could ask us to wait till every parent is educated, I am afraid, we will have to wait till the Doomsday, because I know that those very same gentlemen who preach against the early marriage on the platform, on return home forget all about it and practise early marriage in their own family.

So, Sir, preaching is one thing and practice is quite a different thing. The Government must understand that very often good laws have to be framed to educate the community. Have not the Government framed

many a Health and Sanitary law in the interest of the community which necessarily must interfere with time-honoured habits and customs of the people. This marriage law I need not emphasise is a very important health measure and it will save millions of our girls from unnecessary suffering, preventible disease and death. As a medical woman it has been my ill fortune to witness with my own eyes much suffering and hardship resulting from the evil custom. Therefore I will most respectfully request the Government Members, in case they are not prepared to vote in favour of this resolution, at least to keep neutral leaving it to our Indian members to settle this important question. I will once more appeal to the fathers and brothers who are here to cast their vote in favour of this resolution and thus save their daughters and sisters from the tragedy of child wife-hood, child motherhood and enforced widowhood.

The motion was put to the House and declared carried.

As soon as my Bill for the prevention of Child-Marriage was published in the local press a few among the conservative section of the Hindu public began to attack me both in open meetings and through the press.

I had to face opposition from the most unexpected quarters, even from the University Graduates. When my resolution for raising the marriageable age of girls and boys was accepted by the Council, a few got actually mad and they challenged me by letters to open debates on that subject, they held meetings and sent many memorials and

petitions to Government. While I simply ignored their letters, I was organising large women meetings both in the city and outside, was constantly writing to the press in favour of Sarda-Bill. Finally all the women associations sent a joint memorial and appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Members of the Assembly, to pass the bill into law. The educated and the enlightened women of all communities, were unanimously agreed on the urgent need for legislation to prevent child-marriage.

The public is fully aware of the origin of the Age of Consent Bill Committee, its findings and its recommendations and therefore it is not necessary for me to justify my views on child marriage and my persistent attempts at legislation to put down that evil.

About that time, two momentous events took place in Madras. The Indian National Congress was held here in the year 1927 and in the same Subject Committee pandal, the Indian National Social Reform Conference was held under the presidentship of Mr. Natarajan, the Editor for the Indian Social Reformer. I was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. That year's Conference was a great success, was attended to by 5000 people from all parts of the Presidency and many useful and practical social reform resolutions were discussed and passed at the Conference. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Sarojini

Naidu took part in the discussion. Again the world renowned social worker and the friend of the oppressed and the depressed, Gandhiji visited Madras in the year 1928. I interviewed him and requested him to speak to the people during his famous South Indian tour on the two great social evils which are a disgrace to humanity. He did accede to my request and he freely and courageously expressed his views on those evil practices which were listened to with much respect by millions of our people.

A copy of a letter which I afterwards addressed to him and his reply to the same will be of interest to the public.

A letter to Mahatma Gandhi from Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi dated 4th May 1929.

"Your observations on the urgent need for sanitary reforms and for healthy change in the daily habits of our people, during your journey from Bezvada to Guntur, have appealed to me very much indeed. I quote below your own words. "There is, I know, a custom of saying that these reforms must not be permitted to take the nation's attention away from the work of Swaraj. I venture to submit that conservation of national sanitation is Swaraj work and may not be postponed for a single day on any consideration whatsoever. Indeed if Swaraj is to be had by peaceful methods it will only be attained by attention to every little detail of national life.....The foreign system depends for its existence upon the weakness of the nation. If there are no weaknesses to exploit, it will automatically cease to exist. A foreign government is like a foreign body in a diseased system. And even as

for eradication of a foreign body the system has to be made healthy from within, so also for the removal of a foreign government, it is necessary to remove all the internal causes of disease. Corporate insanitation is not the least of such diseases."

I may humbly submit that I as a medical woman fully concur with you in the above statements. But will you kindly permit me to say, "if education is really going to bring in its train Social Reform, better sanitation and improved Public Health, it is going to achieve this result only through the education of its women."

Under the present social system don't you think that very few women are given sufficient opportunities for education, full development of body and mind, and self-expression?

Don't you think that their very individuality is being recklessly crushed under the burden of customs and conventions?

Does not early marriage strike at the root of all development—physical, intellectual and even spiritual?

Do not the pangs of child-wives and child-mothers, and the unmitigated sorrows of our widows and deserted wives demand an immediate remedy?

Is the Hindu society justified in tolerating or conniving at a custom that in the name of religion condemns innocent young girls to a life of degradation and vice?

Don't you think that as the result of social tyranny, Indian women, with a few exceptions, have lost the spirit of strength and courage, the power of independent thinking and initiative, which actuated the women of ancient India, as Maitreyi, Gargi and Savithri and even today actuate a large number of our own women belonging to the liberal Creeds as Brahmo, Arya Samaj, which

is only Hinduism freed of all its meaningless customs, rites and rituals?

Should not the members of the Nationalist Party, we mean the Congress, burn with a desire and enthusiasm to find an immediate remedy for all these social evils, the source of our national weakness and the cause of our present degradation, or at least educate the masses to liberate their women from the servile bondage, to which they are subject, that they may develop to their full physical, mental, moral and spiritual height, and that they may set an example of courage and wisdom, and above all that they may as wives and mothers rightly and truly fulfil the sacred task of training, guiding and forming the daily habits and character of the future administrators of India?

If the members of the Congress believe that freedom is the birth-right of every nation and individual, and if they are determined to achieve that at any cost, should they not first liberate their women from the evil customs and conventions that restrict their all-round healthy growth, which remedy is in their own hands?

"Our poets, saints and sages have sung the same tune. Swami Vivekananda has said: That country and that nation which do not respect women, have never become great nor will ever be in the future. The principal reason why your race is so much degraded is that you had no respect for these living images of Shakti. If you do not raise the women who are the living embodiments of the Divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise."

"The late Subramanya Bharati, the gifted Tamil poet, has echoed the same idea."

"So would you kindly in your tour advice our men to follow the right and the surest way to attain freedom?"

Copy of the letter received from Mahatma Gandhi by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, in reply to her letter of 4th May 1929.

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I agree with you that there is no salvation for men without women's salvation. I assure you I miss no opportunity of driving the truth home to men.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI,
13 - 5 - 29.

Also, we have not forgotten his fervent appeal to the people not only to support the Sarda Act but also to marry their children after 25 years of age.

Thus, he has come to our help at the right moment and has championed the women's cause bravely and wisely. Is it any wonder that the women throughout India has answered his call for service at this moment?

* LEGISLATION TO ABOLISH THE DEVADASI SERVICE IN THE TEMPLES AND TO PREVENT THE DEDICATION OF GIRLS

IT took a year almost for me to obtain sanction to introduce this bill into the local Council. Then it was referred to the select committee and it finally emerged in a satisfactory form with many workable provisions. Even though I longed to see the evil uprooted, still I was not in complete possession of all the details which I elicited only during its discussion in the select committee. In this connection I desire to express my deep debt of gratitude to the then president C. V. S. Narasimha Raju Garu, for his invaluable help to me to draft a workable act. Even though he belongs to the conservative school, he not only sympathised but also fully co-operated with me in all my efforts for the promotion of moral and social reform. After all I was only a babe legislator and even though I had the facts and the ideas, still I had to learn many of the techniques of legislation from my elders in which they ungrudgingly instructed me.

* See Appendix A.

The devadasis from time immemorial had been enjoying *Inam-lands* for their service in the temples. Some of those lands were in their own names and in their enjoyment while, some being endowments to the temples the Devadasis were only given a portion of the produce in lieu of their service, and a few temples gave them monthly cash payment.

Even though there have been provisions in the Indian Penal Code sections 372 and 373 to punish dedication of minor girls to the temple it was made inoperable in most cases because of the temples continuing their service. Therefore the object of my bill was to totally abolish the system. It must be gratifying to the Indian public to learn that the native state of Mysore having realised the enormity of the evil, has done away with the system even as early as 1909 which was not possible in British India, inspite of the agitation and the demand for legislation from the enlightened section of the Hindu public for the last 60 years and more (a detailed history of the agitation has been published by me in pamphlet form and is freely available at No. 6 Rundall's Road, Vepery, Madras.)

The bill was passed into *law** February 1929 and the Government has since issued orders to the various collectors in the districts to enfranchise the various devadasi

* See Appendix B.

inams and thus free the devadasis from the obligation of service.

While legislation for the prevention of child marriage met with much opposition throughout the country, my attempt to abolish the devadasi service in the temples had the cordial support of all sections of the people. I take this opportunity to record with a feeling of joy and satisfaction that I had all sympathy and support from the press, the platform and the public, more than hundred men and women associations have met and supported my bill and many memorials and petitions from the enlightened and reformed section of the aggrieved communities themselves asking me to proceed with my legislation have been sent to me, many public bodies such as the district municipalities and local boards, mass gatherings of men and women have sent me their approval. Even though the recognised leaders of the Hindu community had been condemning the system both through their writings and on the public platforms, yet the evil practice continued because of its associations with the temples. The vested interests had been jealously guarding the so-called rights of the temples in the name of sanctity while they were profaning the sacredness of the temple itself by their unholy practices and by their selfish appropriation of the temple income to unworthy objects.

The late leader of the non-brahmin party, the Raja of Panagal had the courage to challenge the so-called rights and enacted a measure called the "Hindu religious endowment act" to control and direct the management of the temples for the good of the public. As the above act has been put into practice and as the Government could therefore not take shelter under the plea of religious neutrality, I was able to introduce my bill as an amendment to that act. The appreciation of that measure by those depressed communities who have been clamouring for this reform could be seen from the text of the address of welcome given to me on 3rd November 1929 during my visit to Bezwada.

Dear Madam,

We the members of the Andhra Desa Kalavantalu community, beg your permission to avail ourselves of the opportunity granted to us by divine dispensation, to express our spontaneous and effervescing feeling of deep-seated gratitude and unfailing love and ceaseless and worthy sense of pride for the almost superhuman efforts backed by indefatigable energy you have been bestowing on a cause, well worth the effort of any noble hero. This community, long enchained in the thralls of a narrow superstition and shut off from the irradiating influence of the pure flame of social freedom has long been weltering in the mire of ignorance and treading in the path of social degeneration. In the dark and impenetrable gloom in which the whole community was enmossed, you have brought the lamp of freedom, by setting your heart to the sole purpose of social liberation and by your

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unceasing and laborious efforts, the meshes which for long held the community in social oblivion have been rent asunder and the community has been awakened from the sleep of ages."

I am quoting below a sample of the many letters which I have been receiving from reform associations of the Devadasi community throughout the presidency.

Dear Madam,

The news that your resolution regarding "Cochin Devadasis has met with warm and kind reception in the Madras Council, in as much as it has been carried without a division, has given us unbounded pleasure. We have publicly demonstrated our jubilations by conducting a procession to the Local Tirumala Devaswami where a vow was also paid in honour of your success."

The general public never failed to show their appreciation of my reform work whenever occasions arose. I quote below one of the many such innumerable addresses presented to me.

Erode Municipality Address

Madam,

We the Chairman and the Municipal Council of Erode offer you a most hearty welcome to this town. We are glad to have you in our midst on this occasion of our visit to this town to preside over the ladies conference. It is a matter of pride for all of us that you are the first elected Deputy President of a legislature in the whole world. You have not only discharged your duty ably but you have proved how women can compete on terms of absolute equality with men in every walk of life when opportunities are given to them. The work that you have

done in the Legislative Council in the cause of the emancipation of women is one of which we can be justly proud. As an illustration of the great work that you have done as a legislator we shall only mention the war that you waged against the dedication of girls to temples, a system which has been, and still is, a standing disgrace to India in general, and to the Hindu womanhood in particular.

Your fearless fight against the superstitions and obscurantism of orthodoxy has filled us with great admiration. Your tireless efforts in the Legislature in destroying the Devadasi system and in putting down the system of prostitution will always be gratefully remembered by your fellow citizens.

We take this opportunity of tendering you our most respectful congratulation and wish you long life, health and happiness."

Gandhiji wrote in '*Young India*' as follows :

"I heartily endorse the writer's proposal. Indeed I do not think that the proposed legislation will be in advance of public opinion. The whole of the enlightened public opinion that is vocal is against the retention of the system in any shape or form. The opinion of the parties concerned in the immoral traffic cannot count, just as the opinion of keepers of opium dens will not count in favour of their retention, if public opinion is otherwise against them. The Devadasi system is a blot upon those who countenance it. It would have died long ago but for the supineness of the public. Public conscience in this country somehow or other lies dormant. It often feels the awfulness of many a wrong, but is too often indifferent or too lazy to move. But if

some active spirit like Dr. Reddi moves, that conscience is prepared to lend such support as indifferences can summon up. I am therefore of opinion that Dr Reddi's proposal is in no way premature. Such legislation might well have been brought earlier. In any case I hope that she will receive the hearty support of all lovers of purity in religious and general social life."

Has he not rightly diagnosed the disease? Since I came to know of him intimately on the occasion of his visit to South India in the year 1928, I have been attracted to him and I am convinced to-day that he alone can cure the Hindu Society of all its ills..

When I introduced my amendment to the Hindu Religious Endowment Act to enfranchise the Inam holding Devadasis and thus to remove the root cause of Dedication, I did not know that the above Act does not include certain temples within its operation, *e.g.*, the Madras Temples and also the temples getting a very small income of Rs. 300 or so. I was also not aware that there is a class of Devadasis outside the temples who dedicate their girls not for service in the temples but with the sole object of making them trade on vice.

Therefore to complete my legislation for the eradication of the evil I introduced a supplementary bill (see appendix C) which legislation owing to the dilatory motion of the Government has been indefinitely postponed. No doubt, I strongly opposed the

motion for circulation for the following reasons :—

“Sir, I oppose this dilatory motion because the principle of this Bill has already been accepted by this Council. A resolution was passed by this Council in 1927. ‘This Council recommends to the Government to undertake legislation or if, for any reason it is not possible to recommend to the Central Government to undertake legislation at a very early date, I emphasize the words ‘at a very early date’ to put a stop to the practice of dedicating young girls or women to Hindu temples which has resulted in exposing them to immoral life.’ This Council unanimously passed that resolution. If hon. Members here who represent all parties and classes of people, do not voice the opinion of the public in this presidency, I do not really know who else would voice the feelings of the public better. Having accepted that resolution I do not know why the Government should, at this stage, when I want legislation to be enacted to put a stop to the practice of dedicating young girls to Hindu Temples, come forward with this dilatory motion. This Council will be dissolved in a few months and the effect will be that my Bill will not be passed during the lifetime of this Council. This is not the first time that a motion of this nature is moved in the legislature.

We find that there has been insistent agitation in this country for a legislation of this kind. I have evidence to show that the Government of India have been actively interesting themselves in this question since the year 1906, when they had to sign the International Convention. Again in the year 1912 this question was discussed in the Imperial Legislative Council. At that time they called for a

report from the various Local Governments on the matter. If history is gone through and if only the hon. the Law Member will go through the opinions expressed by the Local Governments on this question, most of the Local Governments will be found to have been unanimously in favour of legislation to put down dedication. Then again, Sir, in the year 1912, three members of the old Imperial Legislative Council, Messrs. Maneckji Dadaboy, Mudholkar and Madge, brought three different Bills with more or less the same object as my bill, that is, to abolish this evil system. The Government of India then referred the whole question to Local Governments, and on receipt of those opinions, brought forward a Government Bill in September 1913 which was referred to a select committee for report. The select committee reported in March 1914, but owing to the intervention of the War, this Bill was not proceeded with. Then again, Sir, in the year 1922, Sir Hari Singh Gour brought in a resolution in the Legislative Assembly. It was unanimously supported. At the time when that resolution was discussed,—I do not want to read that resolution, because it was practically the same as mine which was passed by this Council—there were people there like Mr. Siva Rao and Sir A. P. Patro who defended the institution of Devadasis."

But then the whole Assembly ridiculed them and passed the resolution unanimously. That resolution of Dr. Gour to have sections 372 and 373 of the Indian Penal Code amended, was adopted by the Assembly."

The hon. the President:

"I am not able to follow the relevancy of the question of raising the age of consent, to this motion."

Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddi:

"No, Sir, sections 372 and 373 of the Indian Penal Code relate to the dedication of minor girls. Those sections were amended after the resolution of Dr. Gour was adopted. I am only mentioning that to show that the public opinion of the country was quite in favour of such a measure. Then, the hon. Mr. Ramdas Partulu moved a resolution in the Council of State in the year 1927 which was also unanimously accepted. At that time the hon. the Law Member who was in sympathy with this object, asked Mr. Ramdas Pantulu to bring in a Bill. Now, Sir, even in the Bombay Council, there is a measure for the prevention of dedication which is going to become law. Mr. M. R. Jayakar also has now given notice of a similar bill like mine in the Assembly. The Madras Council having accepted the principle and having passed legislation to dispense with the services of the men holding devadasis in temples, should accept this Bill without any further delay. This dilatory motion will only delay the passing of this bill, and there is no likelihood of its becoming law during the lifetime of this Council.

Sir, My bill is a very humble one, so far as its provisions go. It only makes the dedication of girls illegal. This has already been done by the Penal Code, but the Penal Code has been evaded. Then the orthodox opinion was that minor girls only should be dedicated to the temples; i.e., girls below the age of 12. But the people who have been addicted to the custom and who take their stand behind religion do not obey the provisions of the Penal Code. So, they are now taking the major girls and are evading the Penal Code by dedicating girls above 18 for which Act the temple authorities also are responsible, not alone the guardians of the girls. My Bill aims at making

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that kind of dedication also illegal. There is also another provision as regards their marriages to the effect that marriage which takes place after dedication should be validated. Sir, the Government need not be under any fear of opposition from the public. In Mysore this has been done long ago. In 1909, that Government prohibited the Gaije Puja or dedication ceremony in the Mysore State, and thus have given us the lead. This Council has also accepted the conclusion that dedication invariably makes the girl lead a life of immorality. Having accepted that principle, is there any argument or reason in the proposal that this bill should be delayed any further? My Devadasis Act will only deal with the inam-holding devadasis. But, a large number of women adopt girls, take them to temples and make them undergo the ceremony of dedication, even after the age of 18. There is no religion. These women do it purposely, with a view to make those girls lead an immoral life. So there should not be any more delay. Therefore I request the hon. the Law Member to withdraw his opposition and allow my bill to be referred to a select committee."

It was a very significant fact that Sir M. Krishnan Nair who as Deputy Leader of the Justice Party, has heartily supported my resolution of November 5th of 1927 which recommended immediate legislation to Government to put down the evil custom, now moved the dilatory motion to my bill from the Government bench. Whether the change in his attitude is due to the office he is holding or to the absence of his good leader, the late Raja of Panagal, it is for the public to judge.

I must confess that I missed very much on this occasion the late good Raja of Panagal and the members of the Congress especially the Andhra group who had kept out of the Council owing to the Congress mandate of boycott of the Council. Messrs. S. Venkiah, A. B. Shetty, R. Nagan Gowda, Rao Bahadur Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, Chavadi Subramania Pillai, J. A. Saldhana, A. Ranganatha Mudaliar and K. Uppi Sahib, voted against the Government dilatory motion so as to be consistent in their attitude towards this reform.

By this time, I have found out that the Congress members excepting one or two individuals among them have uniformly supported my work in the Council. Therefore my love and respect for that party have grown since.

Now, I rejoice to state that the Bill which has been sent out for circulation for eliciting public opinion has returned with a full measure of public support, thereby demonstrating to the world that Government has unnecessarily delayed a very urgent and important measure of reform.

The most remarkable event that has happened since, is the courageous act of Her Highness the Maharani of Travancore in abolishing the Devadasi system in her state temples with one stroke of her pen.

We are delighted to read in the Indian

Social Reformer, October 25th 1930 that the Devadasi system has been recently abolished in Cochin in all the state temples.

What was possible for the native state of Mysore as early as 1909 and what the Indian States of Travancore and Cochin have so readily and promptly done to-day, has been found impossible of achievement in British India. It is a most painful fact that we possess yet no laws for the protection of minor girls in this 20th century against the danger of immorality when the whole civilized world is so much advanced in child reform and child legislation. Have we not realised then that only a fully responsible and national Government can solve many of these social problems which still await solution at our hands?

Research into Maternal Diseases

When the Minister for Public Health moved for a sum of Rs. 6000 towards the cost of investigation into maternal diseases, there was a certain amount of opposition to this grant in the Council; therefore, I spoke supporting the motion.

“Mr. President, Sir, I have great pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. the Minister for Public Health. I feel there is great need for this kind of investigation, especially when India records a high maternal and infantile mortality. I am glad, and I am really thankful to Lady Irwin for having taken the initiative in this matter because Dr. Balfour, an experienced

medical lady, when she was here last time, took the trouble of addressing a ladies' meeting about the necessity for research work in India. She told us she had been to London to attend the International Conference of Medical Women, when the medical women from other countries gave a very full account of the causation of maternal diseases while she, as a representative from India, could not give, and she also alluded to the fact that there was no woman medical officer in the Public Health Department in any of the provinces in India. She said she felt very sorry about it and as soon as she returned from the Conference, undertook this work as a labour of love, and as the result of her investigation she has given us very useful information as to the causation of maternal diseases. If the hon. Members had gone through her publications on these subjects, surely they would not have made these remarks. She has furnished us with very useful information on this subject. She has been visiting every province and she also issued a questionnaire to all Indian and British Hospitals in India. She has found that certain diseases are peculiar to India, that certain others are common to all countries and that in India there are diseases peculiar to tropical climates, such as malaria, anaemia and hookworm. Again she has found that certain communities like the Brahmin community recorded very high maternity mortality, as high as 32 out of every 1000 mothers. The educationally advanced Christian and Parsi communities record a very low death-rate. This is certainly a very useful information.

Now, diseases like hookworm and malaria assume very virulent forms in pregnant women and children. We have also foetal diseases like the tropical cirrhosis of the liver. In this connection I will take the opportunity of thanking all the Viceroines, who have helped the cause

of women's medical relief. First the Lady Dufferin Fund was started and now we have got a large number of medical women trained through the help of that fund. Then was started the Lady Hardinge Hospital. Even though it is located at Delhi, students are flocking to that place from all parts of India. I had the pleasure of visiting that college and I found that even though there was accommodation only for 90, they had to admit 120. I also visited Lady Reading's Health School. We badly need a health school at Madras. Every province has got one, Bengal, Central Provinces, and Bombay. But still the Delhi school is doing very good work and attracting students from South India. There is also the Lady Chelmsford Maternity League which I visited. So I hope this work begun by Lady Irwin will bear much fruit and benefit all India. A sum of Rs. 6,000 is after all small and it is the duty of every community to take care of the mothers who are the originators of the race, and such an expenditure must be the first charge on the finance of every province.

Women's Education

Again my speech on the development of women's education during the budget discussion of 1929 may interest the public.

"Mr. President, Sir, I rise to speak on this motion in order to know from the Government whether they have adopted any policy or programme for the extension and development of women's education or what steps they are going to take in that direction, seeing that women's education is very backward. The latest figure for the girls' education in 1928 is 28. Of course, boys' education is backward also as compared with other civilized countries and as compared with the neighbour-

ing Native States where also girls' education is very much advanced. Again, as we rise in the educational ladder, the disparity between boys and girls increases, *e.g.*, when we come to the secondary education, for every nine boys only one girl receives the benefit of higher education, and in the case of University education one girl for every 24 boys is reading in the college. I am not so much concerned with university education for our girls, but I feel that primary and higher education must be within the reach of every boy and girl. The report of the Director of Public Instruction says that there is no hostility either from the parents or from the public to girls receiving higher education as when schools are opened for girls, they get filled to overflowing which shows that there is a keen demand for girls' schools. From the various interpellations put in this Council and from the reports of women conferences, it is patent that there is a genuine desire on the part of the parents as well as the public to educate their girls. When we come to the expenditure on women's education, it is only 17.2 per cent of total expenditure on education. Another interesting feature is that compared with the Anglo-Indian and Christian girls, the education of the Hindu and Muhammadan girls is very backward. That is because of the Mission aided agencies who are actively engaged in promoting the education of our girls, by which the Christian girls are benefitted while the Muhammadan and Hindu girls are not attracted to these Christian institutions. Most of the Christian institutions are boarding. Hindu and Muhammadan girls will not like to be boarders. Besides, these institutions are situated at a distance away from the heart of the city. Of course we know it is not possible for Muhammadan girls who observe purdah to go to such institutions. The parents

of Hindu girls also do not like that their girls should walk long distances to attend a school. Especially in the last quinquennium the progress of girls' education has not been satisfactory as compared with the previous quinquennium. In the previous quinquennium, *i.e.*, 1917-1922 the institution for girls rose by 58 per cent, whereas in this quinquennium, 1922-27, by 26 per cent. This was due to the fact that no provincial subsidy was given towards the development of girls' education during the last quinquennium and the primary education was transferred to the charge of local bodies, which have not been very enthusiastic to open girls' schools in their areas, and the result was that the girls lagged very much behind the boys. Again, when compulsion was introduced by 27 municipalities only three of them introduced compulsion for both boys and girls. That is also another reason why girls lagged behind boys. As for women teachers they are reluctant to take service under local bodies because they have to appear before a tribunal of men and also their appointments under local bodies are not ensured. So, I would suggest that there should be local committees of women to look after the girls' education in the districts. The local committees may consist of the Inspectresses of secondary schools and the wives of officials with the headmistresses of secondary schools which committee may be entrusted with the task of developing girls' education. They would be a sort of advisory body to the local bodies; they would submit suggestions to the local bodies so that they may act upon those suggestions; they would be responsible for the opening of schools, for the appointment and transfer of women teachers and drawing up syllabuses and curricula. Also the provincial subsidy must be earmarked, that certain amount should be spent on the development

of girls' education and compulsion for girls should be insisted on whenever a scheme is submitted, because when compulsion is applied only to boys, the girls are at a disadvantage as parents in the villages make the girls do the work of boys and it is not in the interests of either our individual progress or national progress that this dualism should be allowed to continue—the dualism of educated manhood and ignorant womanhood.

As regards secondary education of girls, in the last quinquennium, only one girls' school was opened, in spite of the fact that there are in the whole presidency only a few secondary schools which are chiefly located in the municipalities. There is only one Muhammadan secondary girls' school for the whole presidency, which is in the city of Madras. So it is no wonder if there is a gap between the secondary education of boys and that of girls. It is therefore necessary that Government should take up the responsibility of opening up a large number of secondary schools in the districts within a few years. Of the 41 aided agencies, only one is serving the needs of Muhammadan and Hindu girls. I will strongly urge upon the attention of the Government that the secondary education of girls be provincialized.

Now coming to co-education, it will not be possible without a sufficient number of women teachers on the staff. In the mixed schools where there are men teachers, they do not pay sufficient attention to the girls. The girls are generally made to sit in the back benches, away from the board and light. Not only that, the men teachers turn their back towards the girls and they never ask them questions. Unless there are sufficient number of women teachers who will combine tact, patience and love towards the girls, girls' education will not make any rapid

advance ; and they won't attain any permanent literacy if they read only up to the third class. Therefore, the Government should have a definite programme for opening up a large number of training schools in the districts to train the village women for working in the village schools.

I have said, Sir, that secondary education has been dominated by the University standard. As we know, the present type of secondary education for boys, has produced a large number of literary men who are going about the country without any employment. Now I do not want that the same fate should befall our girls. The number of girls who take to professions such as teaching, medicine etc., is very small and the majority of girls are meant for home life and our social system is such that our girls marry very early at the age of 13 or 14 and the education that has to be imparted to them should be such as to enable them to look after their homes in a most efficient manner.

Sir, we need an Indian University on the lines of the Women's University at Poona. Further I do not want any commercial value be put on girls' education as is now done with the boys' We have learnt to our cost that a pure literary type of education is of no practical use to our boys and vocational training is in demand. So technical institutions should be opened for girls also. I have noticed hon. Members of this house asking for alternative courses of study for girls. Various women's conferences have suggested that they should have a parallel course, as the majority of our girls do not enter professions. Therefore, they must be taught hygiene, physiology and a bit of anatomy as they will be of much value to them in their daily life.

Then I would urge that these subjects should

be taught through the vernaculars and English may be a secondary subject. Unfortunately English is given prominence in our schools, but as our girls have to leave their schools when they are 13 or 14 it is better that they learn the vernacular so that they may acquire the required knowledge earlier. It would also be easier for them to learn if they were taught through the medium of the vernaculars. I think it is high time for us to provide a University for girls, both to satisfy the demands of the public and the parents and also to make women really practical and efficient. I find, in the Queen Mary's College that the course of study for girls is the same as that of the boys, whereas girls should get a diploma in Domestic Science. I find, Sir, that in Madras there is an European school wherein this diploma is granted. Our Indian girls need this diploma much more than the Anglo Indian girls who study for the sake of getting an employment. Similar diploma courses should be instituted in the Queen Mary's College where they are going to have a Geography course and a history course. No doubt the students gain knowledge, but what they need is a knowledge of hygiene, physiology and domestic science. Under our present conditions of life there is so much of illnaess in our country due to ignorance. To minimize and to prevent diseases, our girls should be trained in the above subjects which will be of immense value to them in their daily life.

Regarding the training of women teachers, there should be a better type of training. As it is, we have not got a sufficient number of women teachers to teach kindergarten. In other countries, women teachers with kindergarten training have proved to be very good teachers. And we also should have such women teachers.

Regarding the scholarships and stipends, only 27 scholarships have been given for all the girls. There are the girls from the backward communities, there are the girls from the Adi Dravidas and there are the non-Brahmin girls for undergoing secondary training in the Lady Willingdon School. The scholarships are very inadequate. We want a large number of women who have passed the school final course to be trained in nursing and midwifery work. Therefore Government should institute a larger number of scholarships. Some scholarships are given by the Labour Department for Adi-Dravida girls which I find, have not been applied for. Why not these be changed into residential scholarships.

Then as regards the play grounds for girls, the less said the better. When compared with the provisions made for the boys they are very unsatisfactory. Now in our own city if anyone would visit the school for girls in Thulasigaperumal Koil Street, he will find a school which has to accommodate 300 girls. The building in which this school is situated is utterly unsuited for school purposes. There is not sufficient light or air. The girls sit in the darkness and read their books with the result they will very soon become short sighted. There is not sufficient room for these children to move about freely, children who are going to be future mothers of the nation! Are they to be kept and taught in such insanitary and unsuitable houses? It is an old house, centuries old, and it is now used for a school. Surely if the hon. the Chief Minister were to inspect the building to-morrow, he will not allow the school to be held there even for a day.

Then there is the demand for the construction of a hostel for girls. This is a question which is coming

before the House for the last four or five years and yet nothing has been done. We are told that there is the Ice House. But, Sir, the Ice House is for widows. The lot of our widows is a very sorry tale known to all and we should not disturb the widows at any cost. Most of them come from orthodox families and their life is already miserable and we should think many a time before we disturb these poor widows from this place. By allowing others to share the hostel with them, we may be inflicting on them a punishment. They will be withdrawn from the hostel by their parents. They come from mofussil parts and their parents are very conservative. We want these widows to get educated to serve the country as they have not the choice of marriage. They will be very useful to the country either as teachers or midwives or nurses. Now we have nurses coming from western countries. We have no women of our own who could do such a kind of work. The Poona Seva Sadan has opened a branch in Madras where they train the widows and send them to villages as teachers, midwives and nurses. Our Presidency should encourage them by providing proper facilities for such work.

As regards Muhammadan girls, higher education among them is very backward. They do not attend any of the missionary schools because of the Purdah. It is impossible to abolish purdah in one day. We know what has happened in Afghanistan where King Amanullah has been forced to abdicate because he tried to break this purdah in one day. Now there is a demand from the Muslims themselves for compulsory education. The All-India Muslim Conference have passed a resolution in favour of compulsory education for their women. I know large numbers of muslims are not for giving up purdah. What can a handful of women do? So I would ask the

Government to provide conveyances. The question of finance may be raised. But I would humbly ask the hon. the Chief Minister how much the Government spends on the education of girls. It is not even one sixth of what they spend on the education of boys. Therefore I would tell the Government that considering the many disabilities from which both Muslims and Hindu women suffer it is their duty to give them education at any cost which would give them enough enlightenment to enable them to dispel ignorance and fight the time-honoured customs and habits which hamper their physical and mental growth."

Here is an extract from the hon. Minister's reply :

" I know that several of the members of the Legislative Council have urged that compulsory primary education should be introduced immediately. I am sorry that the Government are not in a position to introduce compulsory education immediately because it would cost 6½ crores.

With regard to girls schools, it has been the policy of the Government to start girls schools in all villages with a population of 2,000 and more, as will be seen from the budget, provision is made now for the opening of new girls schools this year. At the same time, Government has had under consideration the question of co-education in primary schools, I think the best policy will be to staff all primary schools with women teachers.

My hon. friend the Deputy President, I am sure, will approve of this because I feel that women teachers in primary schools will be better able to look after the wants of the young children.

I think I must also deal with the question of the Ice House Hostel to which my hon. friend the Deputy President referred in her own eloquent way, that is, the Widows' Home. She was mistaken in her idea that I proposed to abolish the Widows' Home. What I wanted was that there should be no distinction made between the Brahmin widows and the non-brahmin widows (hear, hear) as seems to be the case at present. For it is time that when people come forward and demand for money for purposes of education that these caste prejudices disappear. For unless that takes place any further sum spent on education is simply waste of money. We hope to see ourselves before long a united nation and if education does not attain that object it will be better for us if we spend the whole sum of 197.88 lakhs on rural development rather than on education which does not go to broaden the vision of people as then we shall have a community which will be prepared to advance in the right direction, instead of having graduates by hundreds whose vision has not widened in any way, who cannot rise above the level of the sentiments of the village purohiths and who cannot break away from the shackles of sectarian and narrow prejudices. If that democratic sentiment is not developed I feel the provision for education in the budget will be a mere waste.

Coming now to the question of the need for a hostel for the Lady Willingdon College I have already told the hon. the Deputy President that the hostel will be built just behind the college and I hope at least in this hostel the distinction of caste, class and community will not be maintained. I think the policy of the Government should be to see as far as possible to do away with these distinctions. •

With regard to the school at Triplicane, I agree

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with my friend, the hon. the Deputy President, that it requires a new building, and that the present rented building is not fit for housing the school. The Director's attention has been drawn to it and he himself is keen in securing a new building for it. I hope the proposals will be ready soon."

Though I suggested caution in dealing with the widows the majority of whom come from the most conservative families, still I must admit that I very much appreciated the Minister's views on the question of caste or denominational hostels which undoubtedly tend to promote communal or caste feeling among the younger generation.

MEDICAL AID TO WOMEN

THOSE of us who have walked some of the best lying-in hospitals in the West cannot but be proud of the Government Maternity Hospital, Egmore, Madras which can stand comparison with any other maternity hospital in the world.

As the majority of the Indian women prefer only the women obstetricians and women gynaecologists to men, I am of opinion that there should be a certain number of women medical officers on the staff of that hospital.

At a large meeting of women held in Triplicane in April 1928, resolutions were passed requesting Government to employ a number of women medical officers on the staff of that hospital and to give practical post-graduate training in midwifery and gynaecology to all women medical graduates before they are sent out to the mofussil hospitals.

Further I feel that medical aid to women in the districts especially before, during and after child-birth is very inadequate and the Public Health Department as well as the local authorities do not seem to have realised that mother-hood though a physiological function, under our modern condition of life, expose

our women to certain grave diseases, accidents and dangers to health and life.

Therefore I moved the token cut to the demand for Public Health to bring it home to the Government and to the Council the urgent need for organising a provincial women medical service similar to that of the men with a woman medical directress, in the Head-quarters staff.

“ Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move ‘ that the allotment of Rs. 84,14,000 for Medical be reduced by Rs. 100 ’ firstly to urge the necessity of adopting the policy of employing women medical officers in all the lying-in hospitals throughout the Presidency, secondly to discuss the necessity of a woman administrative medical officer among the head-quarter staff, and thirdly to discuss the provision of facilities for training a large number of midwives and nurses.

Lady Asst. Surgeons in the Maternity Hospital

Sir, it is a well-known fact in this country that women patients desire to be attended by women medical practitioners both during child-bearing period and after. As such I feel that the practice of the Madras Maternity Hospitals under which men only are made available to the female patients, requires to be changed and women practitioners should be employed. For example, in Madras our Government Maternity Hospital for women and children has the reputation of being the best equipped hospital in India, and the second best hospital in the world. In this Maternity Hospital, many major operations are being performed and all that practical knowledge and experience is now enjoyed by our medical

men. I do not certainly grudge it, but what I feel is that as our women require the services of women doctors, and if that practice goes to our women, it would be to the benefit of our community. And now, Sir, the residential staff and the permanent staff are composed entirely of men officers, and I was told there was only one lady apothecary in charge of the out-patients, and she has got a few beds under her charge. I think that at least 50 per cent of these places should be given to the women medical officers. One of the arguments urged against the employment of women for the residential staff in that Maternity Hospital was that it was a teaching institution and a large number of men students undergo instruction in that hospital. But what I would point out is that the patients themselves who are the material on whom the demonstrations are held are women. Again, a number of students also are women. And as such, do not the hon. Members of this Council think that women teachers would be better than men teachers? At least they will not be inferior to men teachers. Again most of the labour cases are conducted by the nurses and matrons of the hospital, and it is the nurses and matrons that give the guidance and take the students through the ordinary or normal labour cases. It is only in abnormal labour cases that the medical officers' assistance is being called for, and as such I would strongly urge upon the attention of the hon. the Minister for Public Health that he should take the earliest opportunity to see that a good number of lady assistant surgeons are appointed on the staff of the hospital so that the knowledge, experience and practice gained in such a valuable and well equipped institution may be made available to the women and children of our Presidency.

Woman Administrative Medical Officer

Sir, the next object of this motion is to urge the necessity of a woman administrative medical officer among the head-quarters staff. I feel sir, that medical relief to the women in the Presidency is very inadequate and, especially in the districts there are very few maternity hospitals to administer relief to our women and children. So it is absolutely necessary that a whole-time woman administrative medical officer should be employed at least in the head-quarters staff. She must be entrusted with the duty of initiating schemes, opening hospitals and making enquiries as to where there are hospitals and where there are no hospitals, appointing the necessary staff and arranging post-graduate courses for the women medical graduates and also to institute research into maternal and other infantile diseases. Because to my knowledge, in the Educational Department we have a Deputy Directress of Public Instruction who is now charged with all these responsibilities in regard to general education, and so the women's branch of education is carried on very efficiently. If we find as much literacy among women as we have now it is due largely to that officer. I say this because I have seen the recommendations made for the improvement of female education by this women's branch of Educational Department. I therefore feel that the medical department is as important, if not more important, than the Educational Department, for we ought to relieve human suffering and we have to give relief to women during the time of labour which is the most painful period, the most dangerous time in their lives, if they are to produce healthy children and if we are to reduce the number of deaths among our infants. Having all these objects in view, if we are to make an attempt to achieve them, I feel that one woman medical

administrative officer on the head-quarters staff is not too much, an officer who would be able to devote her whole time and thought to this question and who would be touring throughout the presidency to find out the needs of the districts and propose schemes for the development of medical relief to the women and children of the Presidency.

Women House Surgeons

“Regarding house-surgeons and physicians in the maternity hospitals, preferably our women medical graduates who are to be sent out to the mofussils should be given a training because the skill in midwifery and efficient midwifery depends upon practice and to send raw graduates, or the L. M. Ps. to the districts is not at all desirable, because these L.M.Ps. undergo a course of only four years and they have not got the efficiency and the knowledge of the M. B. & B. S. graduates. To allow them to experiment on all the illiterate women in the villages is not at all right nor charitable. Because I have seen cases coming from the mofussil with injuries for treatment at the city hospital. If these things are to be prevented, we have to give a post-graduate training for these women in the women and children's hospitals of which we have quite a number in the city, e.g., in the Government Maternity Hospital, the Ramaswami Mudaliyar's Lying-in Hospital etc. I fear that men graduates are given preference to our women graduates in this matter also. It is more the services of our women medical graduates that are being required by our women patients than the services of medical men graduates especially in the practice of midwifery.

“Again, Sir, the rural medical relief can well be

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helped by women, because we are having every year a larger number of women medical graduates.

The hon. the President :

“Order, order. Rural medical relief is not one of the objects mentioned in this motion. The hon. Member will have to wait for a suitable opportunity to dilate on that matter.”

Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddi :

“I thought Sir, as I am speaking on the policy of employing women officers I could refer to rural medical relief in that connection. Anyhow, I shall wait for the opportunity.

Women Specialist in Venereal Diseases

Then again we have got a special venerealogist for the hospital. I do not know whether there is any proposal for giving training to women graduates in this line. It is the women that suffer in silence. The women in Western countries insist on being treated by women for these ailments, free, voluntary, confidential treatment is provided for them in the hospitals and it should be so in our country especially where women suffer in silence rather than allow themselves to be treated by men officers.

The Training of Midwives

Then I come to the training of our midwives. This is an important and huge problem because I have read in the report of the Director of Public Health, that only 3 per cent of the women in the rural areas are attended to by trained midwives. There is great urgency and great need for training a larger number of midwives than is being done at present, especially in view of the fact that 30 per cent of the women died in the year 1927, of whom 50 per cent died from puerperal sepsis alone. In Western countries, cent per cent of

mothers were attended to by trained midwives and they were able to seek medical help during the time of their labour from women medical practitioners. When medical help could be obtained from women doctors and the women in the West are being benefitted by it, I think it is high time that more money should be spent here in this matter of the training of midwives and making them available for women in the districts during the time of child-birth. A new system is now being adopted with success in Simla and Hyderabad, which may also be introduced in this Presidency, because our people in the mofussil, rely mainly on the barber midwives. These barber midwives no doubt have got experience, and if they are given scientific training similar to what is being given in Simla and Hyderabad by Colonel Webb and Miss Pigott respectively, it will be of much benefit to the people of our Presidency. I am sure our women at the time of child-birth would make use of these trained dhais and thus be saved from unnecessary suffering and from very many of the preventible diseases. Not only 30,000 mothers died of child-birth, but many others have become incapacitated or invalidated owing to the mismanagement during labour and what is much more serious, that these mothers have been lost to the children and to the families, who could have been saved if they sought and obtained medical help in time. It is the duty of the state and the community to protect the mothers from all these preventible diseases and ensure a healthy pregnancy and a safe delivery. With these words, I move my cut."

**To appoint Women Medical Officers in charge of the
Ante-natal Department in the Government
Maternity Hospital, Egmore**

I move that the allotment of Rs. 100 under grant XXI-Medical-Transferred be reduced by Re. 1.

I want to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that the officers who are going to be appointed to be in charge of the ante-natal and post-natal work will be women officers, because it is stated in the explanatory note that the temporary lady assistant surgeon will be there till the 1st April 1930 and that the question of appointing a medical officer of the civil surgeon grade is under separate consideration. It is not stated in the note whether the civil surgeon who will be appointed, will be a lady officer or not. My point is that the Government should make up their mind even now that only women officers should be put in charge of this work.

I have many a time stated before this hon. House that ante-natal work is welfare work and is more a preventive than curative work. Even in European countries this work is done by women. My wish is that in this country also where the majority of our women would not seek medical aid from men medical officers for diseases associated with pregnancy and child-birth, this preventive work should be done only through women for women; it may be stated that the health visitors will form a connecting link between the doctor and the women patients but health visitors are only subordinate officers and the patients will have to be examined by male doctors and the expectant mothers will have to be given instructions about their daily habits such as their diet, sleep and the importance of breast-feeding, etc. Unless the patients have confidence in the doctor, they will not be willing to express their difficulties, fears, misgivings, etc., to the male doctor. Therefore it is but proper that the work should be done by women. There are a number of women graduates possessing high medical degrees, such as M. B. & B. S., who are unemployed. We have been persuading our women to take to the pro-

fession of medicine. We are giving them scholarships for qualifying themselves as graduates of medicine. Many of such graduates are unemployed in spite of the fact that medical aid for women is very inadequate both in the city and in the mofussils. It is often stated against the employment of women medical officers that the Government Maternity Hospital is a teaching and training institution for male students in medicine. Even then I plead that this teaching can be done as efficiently by women as by men, because all the patients on whom demonstrations are done are women. When I was a student undergoing training in that hospital, I learnt all my practical work from the senior nurse and matron even though I learnt my theory from my professors. There is no reason why qualified women should not teach male students, especially in hospitals where there are only women patients. There are many women hospitals, like the Lying-in Hospital, the Victoria Hospital in Triplicane, the Rainy Hospital in Tondiarpet and the Kalyani Hospital in Mylapore, which are very efficiently managed and which are as much popular as the Maternity Hospital which is staffed mainly by men officers. Then with regard to teaching institutions and colleges, there are the Lady Willingdon Medical School, the Queen Mary's College, The Women's Christian College where the results compare better than those of the colleges staffed by men doctors. I have already drawn the attention of the hon. Minister in my budget speech, to the urgent necessity of employing a certain number of women officers in the Government Maternity Hospital because it is one of the best equipped hospitals in the world. The other women hospitals do not have as much accommodation and as much equipment as the Government Maternity Hospital. Much knowledge and

experience can be gained in that hospital by medical women if the practice is made available to them. When women graduates gain experience from that hospital, it will surely be used for the benefit of many Indian mothers, both expectant and nursing, both inside and outside the hospital."

In this matter, I was warmly supported by all parties in the Council. The Minister promising to employ women officers in charge of the Ante-natal department, when that question comes up for consideration, I withdrew my cut motion with the permission of the Council.

MATERNITY AND CHILD-WELFARE

UNDER demand for public health I discussed the policy of the Government regarding maternity and child-welfare work in this Presidency.

“ Sir, I want to know if the Government as the Government of other civilized countries, is going to take the initiative and bear the responsibility of organizing maternity and child-welfare centres throughout the Presidency, because now the initiative and action in this matter is left entirely to the discretion of the local bodies and the municipalities or other voluntary agencies. When we study what is being done in other countries to save the life of mothers and children and also to relieve their suffering, I believe that our Government is not doing its part of the duty by this most important branch of medical relief. First of all, there are no well qualified women officers to take up the work of organizing and running centres. In England there are a number of women officers who are engaged in the work of organising centres and who are trained to guide and to direct the work at these centres. Here, there is not one woman medical officer in the Public Health Department. The value of propaganda in plague, cholera, hookworm and other ailments have been recognised here, but the value of propaganda for the vital concerns of mothers and children so as to save their lives and to prevent their illness, is not recognised, because in the budget on public health, for propaganda, for child-welfare and social hygiene, etc., only a provision of Rs. 6,000 is made. But in England, there is a senior

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woman medical officer whose reputation has spread even to our country, Dr. Janet Campbell, under whom are working a number of qualified medical officers.

These women medical officers are responsible for the organisation of maternity and child-welfare centres and they carry on enquiries and investigations into the causation of maternal and infantile deaths. The results are made known to the public, not only through the press but also through a number of popular pamphlets and through special propaganda officers. These women officers visit the districts to enlist the sympathy of the local people. Human nature is the same all over and in England also; there was much ignorance among the people; there was a high maternal and infantile mortality. Only two years before, the Minister for Public Health in England mentioned that a mother when she was asked to attend a child-welfare centre, informed the health visitor that she knew how she buried her six children and hence she knew how to deal with the other. Now what do we find there? Every mother knows how to take care of herself and knows how to bring up her children.

The need for a Maternity and Child-welfare Act

No doubt all that is due to the education that has been brought about within a period of a few years, and the Government assuming the responsibility and the municipalities and local bodies co-operating with them. In England and Wales we find there is an enactment called the Maternity and Child-welfare Act of 1918 by which the local bodies are forced to open maternity and child welfare centres and to contribute 50 per cent of their income towards their expenditure while the Government looks to the

employment of proper staff, gives them periodical instructions and directions through Government communiques. Again there is the Midwives' Act of 1903 by which every practising midwife is made to register her name and the midwives are supervised by what are called maternity supervisors and if there is any neglect on the part of the midwives, it is brought to the notice of the Central Midwives' Council. They have also health schools. Owing to these activities in England and Wales to-day, there are 2,218 maternity and child welfare centres for a population of only as much as our Presidency ; 105 day nurseries, 107 maternity homes : 641 anti-natal centres, 894 health visitors and 80,000 trained nurses. In addition to these salaried officers, there is an army of devoted and educated band of women workers. No doubt, here also we have got many voluntary agencies in spite of the low rate of literacy figure among our women. In Madras there is the provincial branch of the Red Cross Society. On that body there are many missionary lady workers with whom are associated our own women and it is only through that association that mofussil centres have been started ; but the Government so far has not come forward to help them with any liberal grant. They have started centres by giving grants, by the members of the committee going to the mofussils and enlisting the sympathy of local men and women. They have up to now started about 46 centres in the mofussil. Every day, they are receiving applications from the mofussil for more centres and have no money to give them.

My Plea for a Health School

Then people ask for trained workers and health visitors ; unfortunately there is no health school here.

Last year, we made an application to the Surgeon-General for a grant for opening a health school, because in the absence of health visitors, these child-welfare centres cannot at all work efficiently; the health visitor has to be an experienced woman, and ought to possess the qualifications of a nurse and a midwife and should possess a public health diploma. More than that, she should have sympathy, love and devotion for the work, because she has to go to the houses of the poor mothers and advise them; she has to enlist their sympathy, be a friend and guide to them—which are qualities needed for a health visitor. The Madras Corporation must be congratulated on their work of maternity and child-welfare relief and on the success of their scheme. But the mofussil municipalities and local boards are not composed of expert medical people. Therefore Government ought to assume responsibility in this matter of the most important and vital section of medical relief.

Then again if our girls want to train themselves as health visitors, they have to go to Delhi. Just imagine girls brought up under seclusion having been forced to go to Delhi. Now the Red Cross association has realized the necessity of opening a school; with the help of the money at its disposal and expecting money from the Government, they have launched upon the scheme of opening a school in the month of July. We hope, that next year, with the help and sympathy of the present Minister and the Surgeon-General, we could get money for the school.

Train indigenous dhais for rural midwifery work

“As regards dhais, I could not speak on that subject yesterday. The Minister himself does not seem to know that in several districts in Northern India, many mothers are attended to during child-birth by dhais who have been

trained by health visitors in charge of maternity and child-welfare centres. It is generally stated that people in Southern India are more intelligent than those in Northern India, and therefore I cannot believe that our dhais are not coming forward to get training. In Northern India where there is so much of purdah, under this scheme, dhais are attracted to these maternity and child-welfare centres by small presents. The lady health visitor becomes their friend, gives them instructions and very soon, they come to realise the value of such training, because it is very much appreciated by the people among whom they practise. A similar scheme can also be worked up here if the Government takes up the responsibility of opening maternity and child-welfare centres and employing lady health visitors who will train the dhais in that area and make them available to our mothers. As I mentioned yesterday, our mothers are allowed to die in such large numbers for want of help. Thirty thousand women of child-bearing age died in 1927 from conditions mostly preventable associated with pregnancy and labour. When science has so much advanced, are we justified in allowing our mothers to suffer and die? Mr. Nevelle Chamberlain, speaking on motherhood's scourge (I hope our Minister also will echo a similar sentiment) said :—

'It seems to me a terrible thing that to-day out of 250 mothers one dies in child-birth and equally terrible that the rate has persisted and unchanged for the last twenty years. And that is not really the whole measure of the injury that is being done. One must not only remember what happens when the mother is taken away and the child cannot have the care which the mother alone can show. We must also think of the mothers who emerge from confinement partly injured in health, the

nervous system shattered, unable to fulfill the full duties of mother herself.'

How much more acute is our condition, where the figure for maternal mortality for our Presidency is 20 per thousand. Therefore I submit, on behalf of the suffering mothers and children, that this House should strongly support this motion by which we may have a properly organised maternity scheme, so that mothers and children may have the advantage of scientific trained help at the time of their need. With these words, I move my cut motion for the acceptance of the House."

In the above motions and discussions, I was heartily supported by the whole Council, but the hon. Minister not giving any definite reply I moved the following resolution on the 8th August of the same year.

"This council recommends to the Government that highly qualified medical women should be appointed on the Public Health Staff to organise and develop maternity and child-welfare work in the manner best suited to this Province to supervise midwives and dhais and to attend to the medical inspection of school girls and women students."

"Sir, in every country, in all progressive and advanced countries, this work of maternity and child-welfare is done by women.* That should apply with greater force to India where a good number of our women live in purdah and never would take medical aid from men and a great majority of them never even consult medical men for diseases associated with pregnancy and child-birth. I may bring to the notice of the hon. Members of this House the fact that an extraordinary

* Vide memorandum of medical women in India to Lady Irwin.

amount of suffering and death during child-birth goes unrelieved in this country. The infant mortality rate and also the still-birth rate are very high. Yet there are no co-ordinated efforts made to organize child-welfare and maternity centres and reduce the sufferings of mothers and children. It is with a view to bring to the notice of this House the great need for such welfare centres in this country that I have brought forward this resolution.

Sir, I have got a copy of the report of the Public Health Department in my hand. It says 'In the year 1927 more than 88 per cent of deaths in infants from congenital debility and prematurity occurred in children under the age of one month.' It says 'there is a tremendous need for the development of pre-natal care—that is, care of the expectant mother.'

Coming to maternity death rate it records 15 per 1000 while in England and Wales it is 4.5 per thousand. Thirty thousand women died in this Presidency in the year 1927 as the result of child-birth, 50 per cent of whom could have been saved if skilled and scientific help were made available to them during child-birth, because the diseases to which they succumbed were largely puerperal sepsis, and hence preventible.

In the rural areas the condition is still worse ; because medical aid to women by women is administered only in cities and municipalities, while in districts and in rural areas only 3.4 per cent of the women are attended to by trained midwives ; whereas in civilized countries cent per cent of women are attended to by trained midwives. The report itself says ' this figure of 30,000 mothers' deaths reveals the painful fact that the bitterest tragedy in life was enacted in such homes.'

Just consider the serious consequences of a mother's

death on other children in the family. Not only are the homes deprived of the mothers but the children are deprived of that love and care which a mother alone can bestow upon her children. It is these considerations which have induced other countries to devote so much care upon their mothers.

Again in the year 1927 a conference was held in Delhi composed of expert medical men and women and social workers, which conference has passed this resolution unanimously: 'That a lady trained organizer for all work connected with infant welfare and maternity care, preferably an Indian, should be appointed on the public health staff in each province.' They were of opinion that greater association of women with public health staff would afford facilities for such medical relief being organised on a sound basis and on a larger scale. Again the association of medical women in India presented a memorandum the other day to Her Excellency Lady Irwin. They pointed out that a woman well-qualified and trained should be appointed in every province on the public health staff as Assistant Director to the Director of Public Health. Further, in the United Provinces they have already set a good example. There is a woman on the public health staff who has turned out very good work. It is reported in that memorandum that she has organized preventive work and she has greatly increased the number of the maternity and child-welfare centres. She arranges lectures and personally visits many health centres. All this work is of the greatest value in a country like India where such a work could not be done by men. Further my association with the committee of the Madras Maternity and Child-Welfare Association has convinced me of certain facts which I would like to place before this House.

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The Maternity and Child-Welfare division of the provincial branch of the Indian Red Cross Society is a voluntary association composed of missionary women and Indian Women who are interested in the child-welfare and maternity work. They have already opened 69 centres in the districts. This is how a centre is started: the association sends out a missionary worker to enlist the sympathy of the local people and to find honorary workers, and the Association itself giving a grant of Rs. 25 towards the expenses of a centre. The local committee is responsible for the appointment of the staff and appoints very often ill-qualified and untrained nurses. Very many defects have been brought to our notice; in some centres the staff are not trained, and the proper equipment is wanting. Certain municipalities do not take interest in the work and the financial condition does not permit of this useful work even in places where they have been able to find honorary workers. It is reported that local people appreciate the work of these centres for the mothers and children. I may submit that these maternity and child-welfare centres ought to serve as educational centres (they are not dispensaries) and as such they ought to be run by well-trained health visitors. A health visitor combines the qualification of a nurse and a midwife and is also trained for public health work, as her work is more of prevention of diseases than cure. She educates the mother on the laws of hygiene and health and how best to take care of her children. In these days when medical science is very much advanced we ought to aim at prevention rather than cure. So these maternity and child-welfare centres should have trained people to give the public expert advice for which work experienced, well qualified and well-

trained women are quite essential. The value of this work cannot be realised by the municipalities or local bodies unless it is pointed out to them. Hence the Public Health Department ought to take the initiative in these matters. In England the Ministry of Health takes a full share of responsibility in such health schemes. As the welfare of the mother is the welfare of the nation the cost of the maternity and child-welfare schemes forms the first charge on the finance of the State. They have appointed highly qualified medical officers to give advice to local bodies, to organise and to develop the centres on proper lines. These women doctors also carry on research and investigation into the causation of maternal and infantile deaths. Then the results of their enquiry are made known to the public both through the press, through a number of popular pamphlets and through special propaganda officers. These women officers visit the districts to enlist the sympathy and the co-operation of the local people to such health schemes.

This is how maternity and child-welfare work is carried on in other countries. There is no use of giving treatment in hospitals after the disease has advanced. We must educate the people on the laws of health and disseminate scientific knowledge among them so as to make that knowledge available to every father and mother in this country. To do this most effectively, we need well-qualified women in the Health Administrative staff of the country, who would plan out schemes, see that the schemes are carried out into practice and also convince the people and the Government of the necessity for such work. The Report of the Ministry of Health in England says :

‘ Now in the year 1924 when investigation showed that maternal mortality did not show any reduction in

spite of repeated attempts, the Ministry got so much concerned with that position that they communicated with the local authorities up and down the country calling attention to the need of ante-natal work, maternity centres and maternity beds and such educational measures as will create an informed and enlightened public opinion in regard to the question of maternal mortality.'

All that is possible here only if the State comes forward with finance and proper staff to help such health schemes. With these words, I commend the resolution to the acceptance of the House."

The Maharajah of Pithapuram very kindly came forward to second this resolution.

" Mr. President, Sir, I have very great pleasure in seconding the resolution so ably moved by my esteemed friend, our honoured Deputy President. It is well known that our ladies feel shy of male doctors. There are some who would rather suffer and prefer death to consulting men doctors. The mover has dealt with the motion so thoroughly that very little more need be said by me. I only hope that every one of the Members of this House will support this motion and that the Government will not come forward with the plea that no funds are available for this purpose."

The whole Council being unanimously in its favour, the resolution with a slight amendment was accepted by the Minister. Mr. Muthiah Mudaliar, the then Minister in charge has made provision in 1930 budget for the post of an Assistant Directress in the Public Health Department, for a qualified maternity

and child-welfare staff and for a liberal grant to the Red Cross Society Health School.

Under medical demand, I wanted to discuss the need for increasing the number of posts for the women medical graduates in the provincial medical service also the desirability of employing women graduates of medicine in the District and Taluk headquarters hospitals and creating a grade for women assistant surgeons similar to that of the men ; but owing to want of time I could not move the resolutions.

We women are grateful to the then Minister for Public Health, Mr. Muthia Mudaliar who evinced a very keen interest in the question of medical relief to women and children, and it was largely due to him that the provision in the budget for a woman directress on the Public Health Department, for an increased maternity and child-welfare staff and also for a liberal grant to the Red Cross Health School has been made and we hope that his successor would see that the grants are utilised for those schemes for which they have been already ear-marked.

XIV

RESERVATION OF SEATS FOR WOMEN ON THE MUNICIPALITIES, DISTRICT AND LOCAL BOARDS

During the discussion on the amendments to the District, Municipalities and the Local Boards Act, I put in a plea for reservation of seats for women, which, I am glad, has been conceded to by the Council.

“ Mr. President, Sir, I am very grateful to the hon. Minister for having brought forward this amending Bill for the removal of sex disqualification, which will enable women to stand the chance of election along with men-candidates. But, I find that in one of the clauses he allots some reservation of seats for some minority communities and backward classes, such as Muhammadans, Indian Christians, Adi-Dravidas and Adi-Andhras. I desire to point out in this connection that the legal and economic position of women in this country especially of the Hindu women is very inferior to men of the depressed and the backward classes. We know that in the districts, however educated, however useful and however intelligent a woman may be, she is considered always inferior to men. Again, the number of women voters are very few as there are very few tax-payers among women and hence the women candidates cannot depend upon the women-voters themselves. I learn from a very reliable source that men candidates have to spend a good amount of money upon elections and our women have no economic independence, very few of them being wage-earners.

We do not inherit our fathers' property, we are not entitled to the property of our husbands, most of our women are married at a very early age and become wives and mothers. So how can you expect the women to find money to spend at the election campaign ? (Mr. S. Satyamurti : Women have Jewels).

Sir, the hon. Member of the University says that the women are adorned with jewels. Yes, that is so because men adorn them with jewels, give them silk sarees and they may even give them motor cars to go to beach ; but independence is quite a different matter. They are like dolls in our homes quite subservient to our men. For some years more, till women are educated, till we get economic independence and get equal share in the property when even daughters are entitled to a share in the property as sons and also the wives share the husband's property as the Muhammadan Law or the Christian Law allows now, we would not be in a position to face the elections along with men candidates.

Then again, there are not many working class women here in India as in England, where it is the labourers and workers that have returned the dozen women candidates to the Parliament. We have no such women workers here to realize their interests and to see that women are returned to these representative bodies. (A voice : What about the tyranny of the home?) As an hon. Member has stated the Hindu woman is no doubt the mistress of the house. Our men always take a pride in stating that the Hindu woman is mistress of the house. I do not deny that they are masters so far as the giving of food, looking after the children, washing of the clothes and cleaning of the house are concerned ; but when it comes to the matter of spending money, the wife cannot give even a rupee subscription for a good object

without getting the permission of the mother-in-law or the husband, or cannot even oblige a brother or a friend with a loan of money or the car. That is the position of our Hindu women.

In regard to the importance of women serving on these municipalities, I contend that the functions of a municipality are in a large measure the functions of a house. A healthy family and a happy family will depend upon the supply of pure water, good provisions, a well-lighted and well-ventilated house and a good drainage system. But what are the duties of a woman in the house? Her duty is to keep the house tidy and clean, to prepare food for her husband, to look after the children and to see that they get adequate medical relief and proper education. I ask the hon. Members whether these are not the duties of municipalities? When the women are recognized as mistresses of the house, why not our City fathers consider them as such in the administration of municipalities. Therefore I plead before this hon. House that when they take up this question in the Select Committee, they might amend the Bill suitably so that they may at least reserve two seats for women in every municipality and also as Mr. James has suggested in his speech, if you retain nomination, you may also show us that concession till our laws between the sexes are equalized.

I opposed the separate electorates for women for the following reasons :

“ Mr. President, Sir, I am sorry I will have to oppose this motion for a separate electoral roll for women candidates. We do not want to form a separate caste and thereby create a sex barrier because, in actuality, men and women have to co-operate in every detail of life, whether in the education of our children or in social

reconstruction or in any change of our customary laws or usages. Unless men and women co-operate, there cannot be any progress either for the individual or for the nation. As father and mother are to a family, so are men and women in the administration of the country, as it is so well stated by that immortal poet, 'Man and woman rise or sink together'; but it may be asked why then do we want reservation of seats for women when men's and women's interests are identical. But we want women to represent the women's point of view and hence reservation for women is necessary. There should be division of labour also and many a problem concerning life—such as health and moral reforms, child labour, care of pregnant and nursing women and medical relief to women and children—would need the valuable advice of women. There are also other weighty reasons against this separate electorate for women; because in the present stage of our existence, the majority of our women are not taxpayers and the educated women do not possess the franchise. Further the purdah women are not conversant with the changes that are taking place in the world as they are not in touch with the moving world and therefore we will have to secure the goodwill of their men when we go in for their votes. Again the majority of our women are illiterate, thereby I do not imply that they are lacking in intelligence and understanding and efficient management of their homes.

I feel, Sir, that illiterate women will be more conservative than educated women. Now we need many changes. If we want to come on a level with the other progressive nations of the world, we do want radical changes in our society. We do want to get rid of many of the social evils that are keeping us down. So unless we have the sympathy and

cooperation of our men in our struggle for our rightful place in society we cannot come out successfully in the elections. Therefore, I oppose the motion for a separate electoral roll for women."

**My remarks on an hon. Member's amendment asking
for separate communal electorates**

"Mr. President, Sir, I would not have risen to speak had it not been for the fact that Mr. Wood observed that he was not convinced by the arguments I advanced the other day to delete the clause in reference to women. I rise to support the original clause in the Bill for a joint electorate.

Now, women have got a better chance of being returned by the joint electorates than by the separate electorate because India is different in many respects from the Western countries. We have been getting many reforms as marriage reform or reform in the matter of inheritance rights through our men and they have been responsible for our uplift so far. Even to-day we have many men both in the Assembly and in this House to advocate our cause and were it not for the co-operation and sympathy which I have received and continue to receive at the hands of my brother councillors, I would not have been able to pilot many of my resolutions and Bills in this Council.

I will now refer to the grant of franchise to women. The motion for the grant of franchise to women was moved soon after the introduction of the Montague reforms by the present Law Member the hon. Dewan Bahadur Sir M. Krishnan Nayar and was accepted unanimously by the Council. Now, had it not been for all these noble efforts on the part of our men in the past and also in the present, I would not have come into this Council at all. These are the reasons that impel me to

oppose this motion. Even to-day in the districts, there are very few educated women possessing the vote. Women are mostly conservative and would oppose all reforms and hence there is no chance of women being returned at elections by these conservative women. As I mentioned the other day very few women are tax-payers and therefore they do not possess the vote. So unless adult franchise is given, even women qualified to stand would be rare because the educated women have no vote in the absence of property. Widows have no share in their husbands' property and daughters do not inherit their fathers' property. Very few women are wage-earners. Again, the condition of our women in this respect is not the same as that of women in Western countries, where many of them are free, unmarried and wage-earners. Consequently they are independent. They have to protect their interests and to compete with men in all the departments of life. Naturally the question now arises: why do women want reservation of seats if men look after the women's interests so very well? Why should they at all sit on these representative bodies? I answered such questions the other day by saying that women are necessary to represent the women's point of view in many of the problems affecting our daily life such as child labour, maternity benefit, rescue work, medical relief, the education of our children regarding hygiene and sanitation in our homes. Their advice and co-operation are necessary in many of these matters. In many of the committees I have been sitting such as temperance committees, health committees, orphanage committees, I have found that women of experience, education and training can give very valuable assistance for the carrying on of the work of these bodies efficiently."

The hon. President :

“ Order, order. The question is not whether women should have representatives or not, but whether women should be represented by a separate electorate or a joint electorate.”

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi :

“ That is what I am answering, Mr. President. The question would naturally arise why women want reservation of seats. We want reservation not because men would be opposed to our interests, but because women's point of view should be represented by women.

“ The purdah women also possess votes, but unless they have the goodwill of their men, they will not be allowed to exercise their votes. For those reasons I oppose the separate electorate for women”.

On relief to the Destitute old and Young

The Maharaja of Pithapuram was good enough to move the following resolution in the Council :

“ This Council recommends to the Government that immediate steps be taken to form a committee to enquire and report as to the best way of giving relief to the destitute orphan boys and girls and to destitute persons of all ages who are unable to earn their living owing to any physical or mental defect, disease or old age”.

Which I seconded.

“ Mr. Chairman, I heartily support this resolution because I feel that a committee of men and women social workers is very necessary to inquire into this important problem of giving relief to destitute orphan boys and girls and to destitute persons of all ages who are unable to earn their living owing to any physical or mental defect,

disease or old age. No doubt we have certain homes throughout the Presidency to take care of some of these people. But these homes have to be organised in order that they may be run on the most up-to-date lines. Now we are thankful to the Government of Madras for having started the Madras Children's Aid Society. The aim of that society is very comprehensive and it is liberally financed by Government. It is not a home for persons without means of livelihood as it provides only for the reception of juvenile offenders, who are given over to the society by the police. It is a training school for them to reform their life, so that they may become useful and good citizens. For the last so many years I have been associated with some of these institutions, and I see that delinquents and juvenile offenders are receiving the best attention from Government while the destitutes and orphan children do not receive any attention at all. Sir, I think the House will agree with me when I state that the prevention of crime is better than the cure of crime. And for the cure of crime we have got several reformatory schools; for example, we have a reformatory school in Chingleput, one at Ranipet and one at Rajahmundry and these schools take into their custody boys after they have committed crimes like theft, or house-breaking, etc. What we desire to see is that no crime is committed. This should be the aim of the State. We have got a home for the blind, the mentally defective people and the deaf. No doubt all these are necessary. But we should see that the number of criminals, juvenile offenders and sick people in this country are lessened. Sir, we have the Madras Children Act, which I submit is a most inadequate Act. I do not know why the Government of Madras has not copied the Bombay Children Act, the Calcutta Children Act, the English Children Act, when

passing the Madras Children Act of 1920. For the information of the House I may state that the Madras Children Act contain certain sections from the English Children Act of 1906. Therefore I find no reason why they have not copied other sections also which provide for such cases as are contemplated in the present resolution. The present Madras Act provides only for taking into custody vagrant children and those who have committed crimes but no provision exists for neglected children, children subject to parental abuse, and for preventing children from falling into the hands of wicked and undesirable persons. Now these provisions should be added to the present Madras Children Act, and therefore I emphasize that the Act should be amended on the most modern lines. In this connexion I would also point out that the grant given by Government is Rs. 10 for each certified child, that is a child, sent by the court to a certified school. As it is, Government would not protect any child without means, unless it has committed some offence, been tried for the same and has been punished by the court. So it amounts to this. If you want a child to be given shelter in a Government orphanage, the child must be a vagrant-destitute or a delinquent. What the State is doing at present is to encourage neglect of children by the parents or guardians and encourage crime. Sir, I do not want to take up the time of the House but I should like to state that in all other countries, there is suitable legislation to protect children, as without legislation in these matters nothing is possible. I shall quote one instance from my personal experience. A few days back a very old woman, respectable looking, brought to me two girls of about eight and nine years old, very handsome, and wanted me to have them under my care, which I have done. The

woman visited them for some time, and now she has disappeared. As there is no provision in the law for the protection of minor girls, against parental abuse though I have a mind to get the girls educated and trained in some useful profession, I am not able to help them. The mother who is now hiding somewhere may come later on, and claim her children. We have copied foreign countries in the matter of medical relief ; we have copied other countries in the matter of education ; we have copied them in the system of administration. Then why should we not copy them in the matter of '*Child Reform*.' With these words I whole heartedly support the resolution."

The motion was put and adopted, but so far, nothing has been done to give effect to this resolution.

I hold the view that women are by nature best fitted to do service to the young and old ; and especially in the administration of the laws to protect those who need such protection, the co-operation and help of women will be highly valuable. Therefore I gave notice of these two resolutions.

"This Council recommends to the Government that a qualified whole time woman officer be appointed to assist the Government in working out the provisions of the Madras Children's Act, 1920, and to organise and supervise Children Aid Societies and other allied institutions."

*"This Council recommends to the Government that a woman factory inspector be appointed to look after the interests of the women labourers and children below the age of 16 in the Presidency Mills."*⁴

Women Police

And also I was given an opportunity to speak on the desirability of employing women police or women welfare workers to deal with moral and mental delinquents.

“ Mr. President, I have given notice of a motion to speak under demand for Police. Sir, there are on the Statute Book a number of laws for the protection of women and children. I feel that the help and co-operation of women should be secured for working these Acts in a humane spirit by employing women in the police department. This idea of having women in the police force may be a novel one to many of us in this country. When women entered the professions, such as medical, nursing, legal etc., they were not at first welcomed, but now when they have made themselves useful, their help is sought after by the public in all these directions. Sir, it is necessary that we should have women employed in the Police Department to deal with women criminals and juvenile offenders. I would go further and say that if justice is to be done to the poor, helpless and friendless women accused of crimes, the co-operation of members of their own sex should be secured. Sir, in countries like Great Britain, Germany and Austria, as the reports in my hands show, women police are functioning successfully. In Austria they are called police assistants and their duties are to deal with juvenile offenders, to take evidence from the women criminals, to accompany them to the police station, to prevent begging by children, to help the police in the investigation of brothels and the examination of women who are accused of crimes and sexual offences.

In England the public are strongly in favour

of increasing the women police. There are already about 150 police-women in Great-Britain. In Austria the police officer is in favour of increasing the number. This is what the report says :— ' There are no women police in Austria. About 27 women known as assistants are employed in Police Welfare Departments. Police President Schober intends to add 13 qualified women to their number in January 1928 and is in favour of women police. Some of the assistants are employed in combating the activities of those who traffic in women and in connection with beggars, women and children whose morals are in danger and juveniles who are morally and physically neglected. They accompany women and children to police courts and institutions, are present at the taking of depositions from them in cases of sex crimes and misdemeanours, endeavour to reclaim women who drink and protect those whose husbands drink. They act as wardresses in prisons and take charge of a Police Juvenile Home and Hostel for women and girls.'

Lately in Liverpool a motion to employ women police was passed. Those that were in favour of the resolution advocated that if both the sexes have to be protected, the presence of women on the police is very necessary. Now we have an Act for the suppression of immoral traffic and that Act gives power to the police not below the rank of sub-inspectors to enter the brothels. Now if we have women trained in welfare work they would be of great help in this work. We do not want women of the constable grade but we want women of higher educational standard who have had training in welfare work, namely experienced nurses who are now doing the duties of health visitors. Women doctors will be very necessary. We will have to examine the age of girls. Especially when the Sarda

Act is enforced the age of children will have to be detected which can be done only with the help of women doctors. Any law that has to be administered will have to be administered in such a way so as not to adversely affect the poor and the weak. The arm of law does not affect the rich. They do not need our protection. It is only the depressed and the down-trodden that need our help. Very often we know and we realize that in administering laws of this kind it is only the poor that are oppressed and molested. The other day we had a case of a poor Adi-Dravida woman who for the small theft of an umbrella was taken to the police station. By quoting these cases, I do not mean to cast any reflection on the action of the police. For the maintenance of law and order we are greatly indebted to the police. In Great Britain the Women's Association has urged the necessity for the presence of women in the police force, even though for discipline and preservation of law and order, British police has been famed all over the world. In the particular case I have quoted above, the poor Adi-Dravida woman was molested for the theft of an umbrella. She was really innocent. Her guilt was not even proved. She was taken to the police station at about 8 o'clock in the night, kept in a room, deprived of her cloth and beaten. Cases of this sort should be dealt with by women workers. Women are helping the judges as jurors in other countries. In Madras itself and in other district centres they serve as honorary magistrates. Crimes are committed both by men and women. If we want the law to be just and to be equitably administered without prejudice to either parties of both sexes, both men and women should co-operate with each other in the administration of that law. That is my submission, Sir.

Again the other day the wife of a poor oil-monger

was seduced by a brothel-keeper and her husband came and asked me to help him in the matter. I tried my very best and sent my nurse who was clever enough to bring away that oil-monger's wife from the brothel. But the brothel-keeper again by some influence or other succeeded in seducing her and taking her away from her husband. In this incident I could not get the help of the police in getting the woman back from the brothel. We all know how the police deal with the women vegetable sellers in China Bazaar Road. With regard to these women-vegetable sellers, we had interpellations in this Council the other day about the way in which they were molested by the police. After all, these poor women may be innocent. So what I submit is that the law should protect the innocents. We want trained women ; let us not call them police women, but let us call them police assistants or police welfare workers. The Commissioner of Police in the examination of women criminals and the determination of the age of girls may need the help of women. Even criminals may not like to be examined by men. They have also a certain amount of self-respect and may refuse to be examined by men doctors. Why should we do things which may be revolting to them? Even in Austria the association of women went on a deputation to the Police Commissioner and urged that it was necessary to have women on the police force and the Commissioner of Police listened to them very carefully and gave a sympathetic reply. In this country where there is so much of seclusion of women and where women do not move freely with men, unfortunately when the former become victims of certain crimes, why should we make their position still more unbearable and miserable? I appeal to this hon. House and also the hon. the Home Member to look into this matter and remedy the existing

state of affairs. I am very glad that the term of the hon. the Home Member has been extended by one year. He has been in the office for the last three years and his experience and knowledge must go a great way to help in the proper administration of law. Now we have had his assistance in the passing of the Bill for the suppression of brothels and immoral traffic. The hon. the Home Member has had experience of the working of the Madras Children Act. Even that Act needs many amendments to enable us to bring it on a line with similar legislation that exists in other progressive countries. I hope before he retires from his office he will see that a suitable machinery is created to work these Acts in a just and humane spirit."

I put also interpellations to ascertain the wishes of the Government in regard to the employment of Women Police.

Question

Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state :

(a) whether he is aware that the Indian Delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council recommended that two trained police women should be obtained from England to train educated Indian women in police and to do protective work among women and children, and to handle police cases involving women and children; and

(b) if the answer be in the affirmative, whether the recommendation has ever been considered, and if so with what result ?

Women Labourers in the Mills

Question

Will the hon., the Home Member be pleased to state :

(a) the number of women workers in the Madura Mills and if there is any place of privacy for them to nurse their babies ?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the negative, will he be pleased to take immediate steps to provide them with some convenient place for the mothers to nurse their babies ?

(c) If it is a fact that the women workers of the Harvey Mills in Tuticorin are not allowed to go out during the working hours to nurse their babies ?

(a) If the answer to (c) be in the affirmative will he be pleased to take immediate steps to remedy those unsatisfactory state of affairs ?

Diet of Reformatory School-Children

Question

Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state :

(a) the diet that is given to the boys of the Ranipet, Chinglepet and Rajahmundry Reformatory Schools ?

(b) If the food is vegetarian or non-vegetarian ?

(c) If vegetarian, if any quantity of dhal, ghee or oil and butter-milk is being given to make it a complete diet ?

(d) If any Food Specialist like Col. Mac Carrison has been consulted in the matter ?

(e) If the answer to (d) be in the negative, will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to consult the proper authorities and supply the growing children with healthy and nourishing food to prevent the future development of deficiency diseases like Tuberculosis, Rickets, Beri-Beri etc.,?

I am sorry to state that the Government did not give any satisfactory reply to the above Queries.

Adi-Dravida Girls' Education

'I beg to move...that the allotment of Rs. 47,300 for Direction be reduced by Rs. 100.' to point out the department's indifference to the educational interests of the Adi-Dravida girls.

"The Labour Department was created in 1919. There is the report in my hand—from which I see that this department has been devoting all its attention to the educational needs of the boys only, because I find that there are 994 schools for boys but no mention is made of any schools for girls. There have also been given a number of scholarships for educational and industrial training. I find there are 550 scholarships, 220 fee remissions and 110 scholarships for industrial training. But only two have been set apart for Adi-Dravida girls. Again about the hostels, there are two Government hostels one at Masulipatam and another at Madras. Even there hostel for girls was never thought of. So, Sir, I should like to know whether the department is there only for looking after the education of Adi-Dravida boys or is it for both boys and girls. Coming to the educational department I find there is no special scholarship at all for Adi-Dravida girls. Out of the 27 scholarships for unmarried Hindu girls, the Principal of the Lady Willingdon College has been good enough to take away two scholarships and award them to the Adi-Dravida girls because there have been a good number of applications from the latter. I do not want in a city like this, that a separate hostel should be run for Adi-Dravida girls. But for want of a good hostel, even for the girls of other communities, Adi-Dravida girls have

had to suffer for want of accommodation. Of course in the mofussils the difficulties are very many. In the mofussils the people are not prepared to have Adi-Dravida girls in a common hostel. I feel it is very necessary for the Labour Department to open hostels at least for a number of districts in one place so that the Adi-Dravida girls in the mofussils may have the benefit of higher education. The Department does not seem to have realized the importance of higher education for girls of the backward community. I need not point out to the hon. Members that if better sanitation, better health or even social reform is to result from education, it should come from the educated women of the community. Of course there are scholarships ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 given by the Labour Department for both boys and girls. But the Principal of the Lady Willingdon College writes to say that no application has been received for these scholarships because Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 are not enough for the girls for their boarding and lodging charges. I therefore respectfully submit that both the Labour Department and the Educational Department should devote at least as much attention to the girls as they have been giving to the boys all along."

Question

Will the hon. the Minister for Education be pleased to state if he has read through the Annual Report for 1928-1929 of the Lady Willingdon Training College for Women, Madras ?

If the answer be in the affirmative, will he be pleased to state :

(a) if he is taking any urgent steps to remedy the very unsatisfactory state of things in the College, (i) in respect of accommodation in the College, (ii) in the

junior school, Tholasingaperumal Koil Street, Triplicane and (iii) in the Hostels.

(b) if he would sanction the grant for medical inspection to the training students as asked by the Principal in the report.

11. Is the hon. the Minister aware that this question of accommodation for the College, the school and the Hostel has been brought to the notice of the Government during all these three years both through interpellations in the Council and through Budget Cuts.

Supply of conveyances to the school going Muslim girls.

I have been connected for the last two years with the Association of Muslim Ladies in the City of Madras. They have prepared a memorandum, published it in all the local newspapers, and also submitted the same to the Government. I do not propose to take up your time by reading it. The Muslim ladies urge that they are seriously affected by the order of the Government stopping the supply of conveyance to muslim girls that are attending the Hobart Training School, as that will handicap the education of their girls. There are girls studying in the primary classes as well as in the higher classes, and it happens that the girls have sisters, of which the older ones attend the higher classes while the younger ones attend the primary classes. If the younger girls of the primary classes are deprived of the conveyance facilities, while the older ones go in a conveyance, they are deprived of the company of their older sisters. If a parent has got five girls, all of them attending the same school, it must be a very great grievance to the parent that the younger ones are not only made to walk but are also deprived of the protection of their older sisters. That is pointed out in this memorandum by the parents of girls.

It is true, they say, that a few of them realize the evils of the purdah system, but as the majority of the community is wedded to the custom, although a few educated men and women of that community realize the disadvantages of purdah, the few are unable to put a stop to the custom, especially when the majority of the population is illiterate. Hence they strongly urge that the women ought not to be penalized and be deprived of the benefit of education.

Another reason that has been given in the memorandum is that women of the Muslim community are very backward in education compared with the women of other communities. Now we know that women of other communities like Hindus and Christians go about freely giving lectures and doing propaganda work for the abolition of early marriage and other evil customs that are hindering the progress of women in particular and the society in general which the Muslim ladies, owing to this custom of purdah, are unable to do because being backward in education they dare not go out and preach to the people. Hence they plead that they ought not to be punished for a custom for which they are not responsible. As higher education advances among them, and a greater percentage of women become educated they will have the necessary moral courage to over-ride the custom.

Another point is this : Sir, most of the girls attending the Hobart Training School come from the poorer classes of the Muslim community. The richer classes send their girls to the Convent schools. The poor people that are residing in the neighbourhood of the Hobart Training School are sending their children to this school. They are so poor that they cannot afford to provide conveyance facilities and they will be obliged to stop the

education of their children, and thus the advantages of education would be denied to them. As the education of the women of a community will facilitate its social, economic and political progress I feel, that the Government should find money to give that enlightenment and education to the Muslim women."

We are thankful to Government for erecting a hostel in the compound of the Hobart Training and Secondary School for the benefit of the muslim girls and for sanctioning free conveyance for all muslim girls attending that school over the age of ten.

1930 BUDGET

OWING to my illness, I did not take part in the general discussion of the budget for 1930, but I got well enough to attend the Council during the latter half of that session.

1930 Budget being the last one during the life-time of this Council, my speech as well as the Minister's reply will, I am sure, interest the public.

“ Mr. President, Sir, I move—

‘ To reduce the allotment of Rs. 929,700 for Government Arts Colleges by Rs 100.

To discuss on

(1) the establishment of a regular school medical service ?

(2) the institution of special subjects in high schools and colleges for women ; and

(3) encouragement of higher education amongst girls of backward communities by instituting special scholarships in the Arts Colleges. ’

Mr. President, Sir, I am very grateful to the hon. Minister for Education for having made a provision in the budget for the introduction of alternative courses of study in the Queen Mary's College, Madras.

Alternative Courses for Girls

I should only point out that the alternative courses should be suitable to our Indian conditions. Now we

need not go far for an example. We have got Professor Karve's Indian University and the syllabus is framed to satisfy our needs. They are not only practical but also they have an economic and cultural value. Under Professor Karve's scheme prominence is given to the vernaculars. Vernacular language is very easy to master and the knowledge could be readily assimilated. The need for the imparting of instruction in the vernacular language is paramount. Sir, Macaulay's filtration theory has been a failure. Professor Karve's University follows the Japan University model. Japan is a free nation and they are acquiring the western system of knowledge through their vernaculars. But in our high schools English claims the primary attention. No doubt we do want a knowledge of English to be in touch with the modern sciences and with the world conditions. But the education which we give to our girls should be such as to render them efficient householders, intelligent mothers and good citizens. I have known educated young women who are not able to feed their children. This is because they do not receive any instruction in their high school careers in hygiene, biology and physiology. Physiology, as every hon. Member is aware, deals with the functions of the human body. It is much more essential for our boys and girls to know the functions of their body than to learn geography or history of the other parts of the world. In Professor Karve's scheme, anatomy is also taught and also a little of Bacteriology and composition of food stuffs, needle-work, music, painting and drawing which make a woman accomplished in the real sense of the word. In my opinion these subjects should be included in the curriculum of our schools. (I am glad that there is a provision in the

budget for music in the B. A. class). I should suggest that all the above subjects should be taught in the high school classes themselves ; for it is seldom that our girls are sent to schools after their 15th or 16th year and therefore it is necessary that their education should be finished before that time.

Sir, the Bombay University has recognized the Entrance Examination of the Karve's High School for students who want to take up medicine. They have also recognized the training school for teachers. Many of the graduates of that University are Principals and Head-mistresses ; they have been found to be capable, efficient and good administrators and they have not been found wanting in culture or enlightenment. The object of education is not only to give the pupils cultural enlightenment but also to make them useful and in Professor Karve's experience the women who had passed out of his Univeristy have been found to be public-spirited and self sacrificing which is the aim of all education. But on the contrary, Sir, we find that young women who have spent so many years in our schools here are not even able to feed their children nor able to keep their homes clean and sanitary.

Special subjects could be taught only by special teachers. Now anybody teaches hygiene or domestic science. We want teachers who are specialized in the above subjects.

School Medical Service

School medical service is a very important branch of preventive medicine. The value of school medical service has not been sufficiently understood in this country. In the high schools they have made it compulsory for boys but not for girls. In the case of primary school pupils it is compulsory only where compulsion is already

in existence. The Principal of the Lady Willingdon College has reported that she finds it very necessary that the girls undergoing training as teachers should have the benefit of medical inspection. The school medical service should be organized as maternity services. The physical education committee has made certain recommendations. There was also a women's committee on physical education which has made similar recommendations. Government must see that these recommendations are carried out as early as possible. The aim of school medical service is very well brought out in the report of the school medical officer in England, Sir George Newman. He says that the object of education is not only to develop the mind of children but also to make them alert, active and healthy citizens. We will have healthy intellect only in a healthy body. If the body is neglected, whatever knowledge the individual might possess and however intelligent he may be, he may not be able when he comes out of the school to use that knowledge for the benefit of himself and the community. The school medical inspection is not done here by special officers. It is very often done by inexperienced officers who have not had any training. This should be done by those medical officers who have had a course in the eye hospital, the nose and the throat hospital. Children suffer from ailments of ear, nose, etc., and if they are neglected they may end in serious complication, incapacitate and invalidate them for life. These should be attended to by trained medical men. It will be only then that the money spent on them will be remunerative. When medical inspection is done in the primary schools and the high schools, it is left to the parents of the children to carry out the instructions or not. The authorities should see that the instructions are

fully carried out. It has also an educative value. When the pupil is taught hygiene and the principles of health, the parents are also indirectly influenced. The Public Health department is spending much money on teaching principles of hygiene and sanitation to the common people. If medical inspection is introduced into all the schools and if care is taken to have it efficiently done, children will be taught the principles of health at an impressionable age. From the report of the other countries we know that such teaching has produced good results. Further medical inspection is one of the best methods of introducing rural medical relief and I hope therefore that those hon. Members who are for the development of rural medical relief will support my motion. If medical inspection is done regularly and proper instruction is given on the principles of health it will benefit the poor children as well as the rich, the illiterate as well as the ignorant in the country.

Secondary Education for Girls

The secondary education for girls is in a backward condition, and particularly that of the muslim girls.

There are many mission aided secondary schools for girls. Our girls do not attend mission schools because many of them are boarding schools and are away from the crowded localities of the city. Unless the secondary education of girls is provincialized there is no chance of any large number of girls having the benefit of secondary education. Secondary education is in the hands of three agencies—the district boards or the local boards, the municipalities and the Local Government. The district boards and the local bodies have not taken any initiative in respect of secondary education for girls because they are already engaged with elementary education. Now we find that the

Government have not opened any school in the course of last year. As there are very few secondary schools for girls in the mofussil, girls come to Madras and, not finding accommodation here, they have to return home without any education. Unless we have a sufficient number of girls who have had secondary education, we will not have enough number of women teachers for elementary schools. Again we want them to be trained as nurses, health visitors and midwives. Therefore, a sufficient number of secondary schools should be opened. Again the scholarships are available only for a few. The rest are handicapped for want of sufficient number of scholarships. Among the backward communities very few women reach the stage of intermediate education; for example, the Oriya girls do not get any scholarships and they have to be going about asking individuals for financial help. If the backward people are to come on a par with the other communities in respect of education and sufficient encouragement is not given to them by the institution of special scholarships in the high school and collegiate department, it is not possible for these communities to make any progress."

The Minister's Reply

"Mr. President, I am sorry that the hon. the Deputy President is not in the House this morning, because she was referring to an important subject, the medical inspection of schools and colleges. She also referred to the curricula being differentiated with regard to girls in our schools and colleges. The Surgeon-General was appointed to report on the medical inspection of schools in the year 1927 and what he said was that medical inspection should be conducted by a permanent staff of medical officers, assisted by part-time medical practitioners, the former [serving as a nucleus for this inspection. The

Surgeon-General's recommendation was considered and a scheme was drawn up to introduce it in the districts of Chingleput and Coimbatore but the scheme was found to be costly, and we have again asked the Director of Public Instruction to submit a revised scheme. The scheme will probably be considered in connection with the budget for the year 1931—32. The scheme which was proposed by the Surgeon-General was so elaborate that we thought it would be inexpedient in the present state of our finance, when more money is required for the spread of elementary education. It would be hard to find the sum necessary for this and if the scheme was introduced into these two districts only, we would have to extend it to other districts as well, because there will be no justification for having medical inspection on elaborate lines only in two particular districts and not for the whole province. That is the reason why we have asked for a scheme which would be less costly, so that the scheme could be tried in one or two districts to begin with and then gradually extended throughout the whole province.

With regard to the question of curricula, which the hon. the Deputy President specifically raised, I would point out domestic economy and sewing are taught compulsorily in all the girls' schools and provision has also been made for teaching both music and domestic science in all the girls' schools under the Government. The Secondary School Leaving Certificate Board have now included both music and domestic science as additional subjects in the secondary school leaving certificate course, and to that extent, I may say that there has been a revision of the curricula, which the hon. the Deputy President has been asking for the last two or three years. In the Queen Mary's College also, pro-

vision has been made for teaching music in the Intermediate classes and as will be seen from the supplementary demand for which notice has been given, it is also proposed to teach music in the B. A. classes during the next academic year. (A voice from the opposition: 'Is it Indian or English music?') It will be both Indian and English music. But, as there is nobody who has taken English music in the Intermediate classes, there will not be anyone taking it for the B.A.

The hon. the Deputy President also raised the question of granting special scholarships for women belonging to the backward classes. In reply to that, I may state that the following scholarships are being awarded to the students in the Queen Mary's College: 16 scholarships in the Intermediate classes of Rs. 9 a month and 16 scholarships in the B.A. classes of Rs. 14 a month and fee remission up to 20 per cent is given on account of pupils who can show that they belong to any of the backward communities mentioned in the list under the Grant-in-Aid Code and who produce certificates showing that their parents are not in a position to pay their fees in full. With regard to the other colleges also, the women students have a number of general scholarships and half fee concessions given under the Madras Educational Rules. In a report which the Director of Public Instruction submitted recently, he mentioned that scholarships with regard to all classes were adequate; as far as depressed class pupils were concerned, they were not quite adequate. Since the submission of that report, the Government have now sanctioned the institution of fifteen residential scholarships of the value of Rs. 25 a month, tenable for depressed class students, both men and women, in the various colleges concerned. In instituting these scholarships the needs of the women of

the depressed classes have been specifically kept in view and if women come forward and continue their studies to the collegiate standard, the question of giving them some of the scholarships marked out for these classes will be considered.

I think it is Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi who raised the question of hostels attached to the Lady Willingdon Training College. There are three hostels now attached to this college namely, the Ice House Hostel, the Indian Christian Hostel and the Non-Brahmin Hindu Hostel. It is the intention of Government to see that these hostels are combined into one ; but the question now is to find a suitable locality for it. Mr. President, the fishermen village near the Ice House Hostel has been reserved for the building of this hostel, and it is not possible to turn out the fishermen from that place easily ; for it is not possible to find proper accommodation for them elsewhere. You know in this country as well as elsewhere it is very hard for a person to leave all on a sudden the habitation that he has been having for well nigh a quarter of a century ; and I hope some method will be found by which these fisher-folk could be given better accommodation in other places and then it will be possible to build a hostel for all the three groups that now exist and thereby more accommodation for the pupils reading in the Lady Willingdon Training College.

In this connection I must mention that Rao Bahadur Vijayaraghavalu Chettiar who owns a plot of land by the side of the college has offered to construct a hostel for Non-Brahmin girls. The plans and estimates are just ready and have been received and this hostel may be constructed during the year, because it is one of private benefaction, and if that is done the necessary accommodation for girls reading in the Lady Willingdon

Training College will be found.

I think it was Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi who raised the question of medical inspection and asked whether it was enforced. Medical inspection is compulsory in all secondary schools, in all colleges for men and women in the Madras University area and in all elementary schools where compulsory education has been introduced. The scheme has been introduced optionally in the Andhra University area and in secondary schools for girls. The hon. Member, I think suggested that the scheme should be made compulsory in secondary schools for girls and in elementary schools for boys and girls. As I have said in the beginning of my speech it is impossible to work it out compulsarily for the simple reason that there are other schemes for which money could not be found, if this is adopted."

Dr. Subbaroyan the then Minister in charge of education and Local self-Government has been very sympathetic towards the women's aspirations and has favoured many schemes for the spread of girls' education during his ministry. The institution of advanced music, of science classes and the alternative courses of study in the Queen Mary's College came about during his period and a definite policy for the rapid spread of women's education such as the opening of a number of training schools for women teachers in the Presidency and of girls schools in school-less areas in the districts, had been adopted.

Again compulsory system of physical in-

struction in both boys' and girls' schools, the appointment of a domestic science expert to teach Home Science in the high schools for girls, the introduction of medical inspection in the secondary schools for girls and the exemption of poor girls from the payment of school fees, all these wise measures, will ever stand to his credit.

Above all, his brave stand against communal and caste hostels and his G.O. to help the admission of the Adi-Dravida children into common schools, cannot but evoke sympathy and appreciation from the advanced section of the public.

TODDY SHOPS AND EXCISE LICENSING BOARD

MY criticisms on the policy of the Excise licensing Board in regard to the location of the toddy shops.

"I want to place before this hon. House certain facts which have come to my notice, and also the representations of the Women's Association in the City made to the Licensing Board and the Government. I am very thankful to Mr. Cotterell for the first part of his reply that private representations will be heard and given effect to. Our experience has been otherwise. Only last year the Women's Christian Temperance Association got a resolution signed by a number of women and men citizens of the locality, *viz.*, Randall's Road, and sent it to the Collector. I myself wrote to the Collector to give effect to that resolution. It was sometime in July last that under the auspices of the Mothers' Association they passed a resolution and sent it to the Commissioner, to the Collector and to the Licensing Board and so far we have not had any reply and the toddy shop is going on very briskly in all its rigour. Of course I do admit Mr. Cotterell's statement that fishermen would like to drink after a hard day's labour. No doubt they would like because after working in the hot sun they get naturally fatigued and consequently they may like to take some drink, but the question is 'will their wives and children like it?' The condition of labourers and the poor inhabitants of the cheris in the

City of Madras is very pitiable. As the hon. Mover of the adjournment motion has pointed out, these shops are located on their way home and naturally the fishermen after their hard days labour are tempted to drink. They are illiterate labourers and they have not been taught the evils of drink. Even if they have been taught, it is too much to expect them not to drink ; because the toddy shop-keepers sell meat and pickles with too much salt in them with a view to increase the thirst of these labourers, so that they may drink more toddy. Not only they drink too much but I have seen them inviting their friends to drink at the expense of their wives and children. I have seen little children taking toddy in those places. Under these circumstances, I think that it is not in public interest or health or morality of the people that these shops should continue to exist in such objectionable places. I am very thankful to the hon. Minister for the sanction of four lakhs of rupees. We know that in Madras the revenue from excise is very large, being 33 per cent of the total revenue, and it tops the list among other provinces. This large amount of revenue comes from poor men's pockets. If you want to help these poor people, the importation of foreign liquor will have to be stopped and the location of these toddy shops should receive the consideration of the hon. the Excise Minister and the Government. So long these shops continue in these localities, no amount of temperance propaganda would have any effect upon the poor inhabitants of those localities. No amount of education, no number of night schools, no amount of improvement in hygiene and sanitation of those areas, no amount of facilities for good housing will benefit the poor because the men spend three-fourths of their earnings in the toddy shops and their wives have to go

outside their homes to earn. The misery of those families cannot be depicted in mere words."

Prohibition

Dewan Bahadur B. Munisamy Naidu moved a token cut to the demand for Excise, for the introduction of total prohibition in 2 or 3 districts and I participated in that debate also.

"Mr. President, Sir, I would not have intervened in the debate had it not been for some of the observations made by Mr. R. Srinivasan about the efficiency of the wage-earners after they take a bottle of drink. The modern medical research has proved beyond all doubt that drink lessens the wage-earning power. We know America has introduced prohibition. The Americans are a business people. They care more for efficiency than for anything else. They are the most successful commercial people and traders of the world. And they have found after the introduction of complete and total prohibition the wage-earning power of the citizen has increased. Even the Trade Unions have voted for prohibition because they have found that the labourers turn out more work when they are not drunk than when drunk. Accidents have become less because when prohibition was not introduced in America there were more railway accidents and railway collisions and accidents in industrial firms. Now I am sure that Mr. Srinivasan would be convinced that drink does not increase the wage-earning capacity of labour. A very intelligent wife once told me that she would rather prefer an uneducated husband who is an idiot to an intelligent and educated husband who is a drunkard. Now the question facing this country is the problem of the poor labourers.

When we see thousands of these labourers after a hard day's work in the mills sitting on the wayside near the toddy shops, it would certainly move anybody to take immediate action to close those shops. No doubt the liquor is not entirely under the control of the Minister even though he is in charge of that portfolio.

We know that the whole world is going in for prohibition. The British Cabinet is a dry cabinet because they have been returned by women. The Emperor of Japan is a teetotaler. We have had illuminating lectures from one of the American missionary workers, Miss Mary Campbell, who has been touring throughout the Presidency and I am inclined to believe all her statements. She says that the people in this country, rich and poor, demand prohibition and the country is ready for prohibition. No doubt, stringent laws are necessary to enforce prohibition. I was going through the Excise report of the last year. When Government closes a shop in one place the drunkards go to another place for drink. Vested interests manufacture illicit drink and they import liquor from Pondicherry. Therefore a suitable machinery has to be employed. I am very thankful to the hon. Minister for the amount that has been sanctioned for the propaganda. No doubt, we all believe in educative propaganda but educative propaganda must go hand in hand with effective legislation. Nowhere in the world these social evils have been put down by propaganda alone. We know that slavery required legislation ; so also piracy ; social evils that are longstanding cannot be removed by educative propaganda alone. I do sympathize with the motion that has been moved so ably by the Leader of the opposition, Dewan Bahadur B. Muniswami Naidu. His demand is

a very moderate one ; he wants prohibition to be introduced only in two or three selected districts. I am sure that the hon. Minister also is sympathetic towards this motion. Surely at a time when the whole country is demanding prohibition especially when our religion is against drink, if we had a dictator like Mussolini we would have got what we wanted without going through all the speech-making in the Council. This Government having accepted the policy of bringing about prohibition in twenty years, could they not accept total prohibition at least in one or two selected districts ?

On Birth-Control

“Mr. President, Sir, I am highly grateful to the two hon. Members of this House for having brought this question before this Council, but I am sorry that I do not entirely agree with both of them in all the views they have expressed. (Hear hear). Even though birth-control is necessary for certain conditions of health and for certain diseases which are communicable and which the parent should not propagate to the progeny, because it is for the future generation that we should live, not so much for ourselves, I feel that it is rather premature for this country to practise birth-control. What we urgently need is propaganda against infant marriages. There is no meaning in tolerating marriages between the ages of 8 and 12 and at the same time preaching to those children birth-control. How are they to learn and how are they to practise ? Instead of birth-control, we ought to teach them self-control (Hear, hear.) Sir, science and experience have proved that continence is conducive to health and incontinence is productive of diseases. India famed for its eminent philosophy, religion and spirituality should give the above message to the world. Now in a country where even the educated men and women, B.As. and

M.As. do not realize the evils of early marriage. where in Malabar a section of the Brahmins called Nambudris practise polygamy in an acute form, I feel birth-control clinics and birth control teaching will only produce irresponsibility among people. We want more maternity and child-welfare centres to teach the people the sanctity of motherhood and fatherhood. As there is not much time for me, I will only read from the writings of that Great spiritual leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who says :

‘I think it is the height of ignorance to believe that the sexual act is an independent function necessary like sleeping or eating. The world depends for its existence on the act of generation, and as the world is the playground of God, and a reflection of His glory, the act of His glory, the act of generation should be controlled for the ordered growth of the world. He who realizes this will control his lust at any cost, will equip himself with the knowledge necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the nation and give the benefit of that knowledge to posterity.’

Therefore, what we really want is a chain of maternity and childwelfare centres throughout the Presidency and I have given notice also of a cut motion that these centres should be liberally financed by the Government. And if married women want advice, it may be given at those centres. Even in England the Ministry of Health thought it premature to open birth-control clinics where the people are cent per cent literate. Can it be said then that people here are ready for such a teaching? Of course in their country it is the women that demand it, but here, our men are championing the cause of women for which we are grateful indeed. In my opinion we can wait till we eradicate child marriages and till people become literate and are able to use the knowledge given to them to the

benefit not only of themselves but also of the community at large. The Ministry of Health in England to a deputation of women who waited upon that body and to a resolution of Lord Buckmaster replied as follows :

‘That maternity and childwelfare centres should deal with expectant mothers and not with the married or unmarried or those contemplating the use of contraceptives ; ante-natal centres ought to give advice with regard to birth-control and exceptional cases where evidence of pregnancy seems undesirable on medical grounds should be referred to private medical practitioners or hospitals.’

“I would therefore appeal to the high officials that are going about the country preaching birth-control and also to the hon. Members of this House to start a campaign against child-marriage. We know many such marriages have taken place recently. Could those boys and girls realize the responsibility of fatherhood and motherhood?”

The History of the Act for the Suppression of Brothels and Immoral Traffic

The Madras Vigilance Association under the wise direction and guidance of the Rt. Rev. E. H. M. Waller, Lord Bishop of Madras had been carrying on intensive study and investigation into the conditions of brothels in the city of Madras, since 1924 and having felt the need for legislation to close up the brothels in the city, drafted a Bill on the model of the Bombay, Calcutta, Burma and the English Acts and had it ready by 1926. The Association appealed to Government to introduce it as a Government measure. Not receiving any reply from them, soon after my nomination to the Council, a combined deputation

of the Madras Vigilance Association and the Women's Indian Association waited upon the then Law Member, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer. He told us that the Government would not introduce it as a government measure but suggested that it might be brought into the Council by a private member. As I was already in charge of another bill, we requested Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer, B.A., B.L., of the Madura constituency to introduce it, who kindly consented to do so.

The public at that time were completely ignorant of the steps that had been taken in other countries for suppressing commercialised vice. Owing to the small percentage of educated women in the country, women themselves had not given a thought to this subject and had not read any recent literature on the subject. Therefore much ignorance prevailed here in regard to that question. Prostitution was thought to be a necessary evil and even some among the educated believed it to be a necessity for the health and well-being of men. The popular notion was that men could not be continent.

But now a great change has come upon the public mind within this period of four or five years. Owing to the constant agitation set up by the Vigilance and Women Associations both through the press and the platform, the public have become convinced of

the need for the control and suppression of commercialised vice through legislation.

In this connection I must not omit to mention two names—Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar, M.A., B.L., and Mrs. Jinarajadasa of the Women's Indian Association both of whom have rendered yeoman service to the cause of social purity in this Presidency as Joint Secretaries of the Madras Vigilance Association.

In addition Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar's knowledge of law and his experience of Indian conditions have been of very great help to us in this matter.

Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer after one year's delay due to the fear that the Police might abuse their power and oppress the women who were after all in his opinion a necessity to society, introduced it in an amended form with the following important clauses contained in the vigilance bill deleted.

Living on Earnings of Prostitution

(i) Any person who knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution of another or others shall be punished with whipping or imprisonment which may extend to Rs. 1000 or with any one or more of them.

Presumption

(ii) Where any person is proved to be living with or to be habitually in the company of a prosti-

tute and to have exercised control, direction or influence over her movements in such a manner as to show that such person is aiding, abetting, or compelling her prostitution with any other person or generally it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that the person is knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution."

The Women's Indian Association as well as the Vigilance Association were not satisfied with the amended bill; therefore I wrote to the Government of India for sanction to introduce the original vigilance bill in my name and I obtained the sanction also; but Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer promising that he would include the deleted clauses at the select committee stage I withdrew my motion for introduction.

About that time, the report of the League of Nations Expert Committee on the traffic in women and children being available in India, I circulated its findings and recommendations among the members, published them in the press and spoke on the same at meetings of men and women. The discussion on the bill itself during its introduction and the subsequent passage through the Council was an education to the public so much so when an hon. Member of the House moved for circulation of the bill among the public, many hon. Members in the House opposed the motion and defeated it by a majority,

while all the press, both English and vernacular criticised the motion for circulation.

At the Select Committee stage, a questionnaire was issued to experienced social workers, medical men and women, to the Members of the Madras Vigilance Association etc., many important witnesses came forward to give evidence before the Select Committee and much valuable data was collected during that stage.

It was found that there are more than 600 brothels in the city alone, hundreds of minor girls are forced to live in such brothels, and the proceedings of the select Committee during this stage having been thrown open to the public and to the press, the above findings were broadcasted, so much so the public actually began to clamour for legislation, while the members of the select committee became thoroughly convinced of the urgent need of such a measure not only for this city but also for the whole Presidency. Even the supporters of the safety-valve-theory have been converted to the creed of the abolitionists because of the horrifying reports of the brothel life. The evidence was unanimous on the following questions.

(1) On the immediate removal of minor girls from brothels to a safe custody.

(2) On the separation of minor girls from prostitute mothers.

(3) On the inclusion of the prostitute devadasis within the purview of the Bill.

(4) On the punishment of the third party who live on the earnings of a prostitute.

My repeated attempts to incorporate at the Select Committee stage the deleted clauses of the original Vigilance Bill into Mr. K. R. Venkatrama Aiyer's Bill having failed, I had to content myself with writing a dissenting note signed by myself and a few other hon. Members on the report of the Select Committee in the hope that we might introduce the clauses as amendments to his bill during its final passage in the Council.

Minutes of Dissent

I consider that the Bill as shaped by the Select Committee is defective in this respect.

Any legislation for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and children will be unsatisfactory and ineffective unless provision is made for the punishment of the person who controls a prostitute and lives on the earnings of the prostitute. There cannot be any objection to legislation for punishing any person for such earnings on the ground of impropriety or inexpediency. The exploitation of female destitution and helplessness for personal gain should not be allowed to go unpunished in any civilised community. The only caution that must be observed is to exclude from the purview of the Bill the class of persons who have to reside with prostitutes on account of relationship but do not abet the prostitution or control the movements of the prostitute.

The essential ingredients of an offence of this class are (1) intimate association for gain, (2) direction or

control over the prostitutes' movements, and (3) abetment of prostitution. Where these conditions are satisfied, there cannot be any reasonable objection to provide for the punishment of this class of offenders. The clause relating to this class of offence is an indispensable supplement to that relating to the keeping of brothels. It is not unlikely that the traffic in women will simply change shape and flourish in spite of the suppression of brothels unless and until this class of offence is made punishable under the Bill. It is therefore necessary to insert a new clause in the Bill to the following effect : —

“Whoever knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of a prostitute and exercises control, direction or influence over her movements in such a manner as to show that he or she is aiding, abetting, or compelling her prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to Rs. 1,000 or with both.”

This clause is a great improvement over the corresponding provisions of other enactments.

The corresponding section, section 6 of the Calcutta Act runs thus :

(1) Any male person who knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years or with whipping or with both of these punishments and also be liable to a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees.

(2) Where a male person is proved —

(a) to be living with or to be habitually in the company of a prostitute, or

(b) to have exercised control, direction or influence over the movements of a prostitute, in such a manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compel-

ling her prostitution with any other person or generally, it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that he is knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution.

Section V of the Bombay Act and section VII of the Burma Act are almost identical in terms as that of the Calcutta Act. The corresponding provisions in the English Enactment is to be found in section 1 of the English Vagrancy Act of 1895, 61 and 62 of Victoria, Chapter 39 as amended by 2 and 3 George V, Chapter 20, sections 7 (1) and (4).

By these statutes it is provided that whoever knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution shall be punished. Where a male is proved to be living or habitually in the company of, or proved to have exercised control, direction or influence over the movements of a prostitute in such manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution with any other person or generally, he shall, unless he can satisfy the court to the contrary, be deemed to be knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution. Whoever being a female, for the purpose of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a prostitute in such manner as to show that she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution with any person or generally shall be punished.

The dissenting note was signed by me as well by Messrs. A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, Syed Tajudin, K. R. Venkatrama Aiyer, F. E. James and Abdul Hamed Khan, who were convinced of the importance and the necessity of the clause."

A deputation composed of the members of the Vigilance and the Women's Indian

Associations also waited upon His Excellency Sir Frederick Stanley with a request that the Government should allot one or two non-official days for the discussion of the bill, and also the amendments to punish the third party living on the earnings of prostitution, should be supported by the Government. His Excellency promised the deputation that he would do his best to see the Bill through.

31st January 1930 was allotted for the final discussion of the bill. We were anxiously looking forward to that date and I was praying that my amendment to punish the third party might be accepted by the Council. The ways of providence are unfathomable: on the 31st day, a dear and near relation of mine was taken suddenly and seriously ill. I had to tear myself away from his bed-side and with an indescribable pain and anguish of heart, I went to the Council that day.

The fate of the bill which had been engaging my mind for 4 years had to be decided on that day as it was known that there was no other non-official day available during the life time of that Council. I thought of the miserable lot of the many thousands of young innocent helpless girls in our brothels, if this bill should fail to become law or even if this bill should be delayed by another 3 or 4 years.

As my father was lying unconscious and did not respond to my prayers, I had the

consolation that very soon his spirit would bless me for having discharged my duty to the public! Else I would not have had the strength of mind to part from him at that supreme moment and be present in the Council chamber. My first amendment was

“Substitute—Prostitute is a person of either sex who uses the body for promiscuous sexual intercourse, under conditions of hire” for “Prostitute means a woman who offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse for hire.”

I was not sure how the House would receive that definition and therefore, I wished that the amendment should be moved by a member of the other sex.

Mr. S. Arpudaswami Udayar, a gentleman of real culture and enlightenment who very kindly undertook to move that amendment made a short and convincing speech.

“There are provisions which penalize women who are guilty of promiscuous sexual intercourse. There is nothing which penalizes the man who is primarily responsible for the moral degradation to which the woman is brought. Shakespeare says ‘Frailty, thy name is woman.’ But it is always the man who is responsible for shattering this frail vessel for bringing the woman to a state of depravity, embittering her future existence, deserting her and making her eke out her livelihood in this most abominable manner. Everybody understands that this kind of promiscuous sexual intercourse is a social evil and a moral evil. It is an evil both in the case of the man and in that of the

woman. The former has no excuse whatever. He is married. Why, being faithless to his wife, being disobedient to his parents and attaching himself to a woman of this nature, should he not be considered as an abettor and a person primarily responsible for this? Is he not to be penalized for this physical, moral and social evil? Is all the responsibility to be thrown only on the woman? Is she alone to be penalized for this crime? Therefore, Sir, I think the House will do well to accept this definition in preference to the one given in the Bill, although the latter is the accepted definition the world over."

It was ably seconded by the Swarajist Member Mr. R. Nagan Gowda who said :

"I do not think the House will agree to two standards of morality being set up, one for man and another for woman. I think, Sir, that as one of the famous workers in the cause of better morality stated, woman alone is burdened with the legal consequences of a mutual act. The State propagates the distasteful idea that there is a different morality for the two sexes."

"That is something which we cannot accept. It may be stated in defence of this idea that woman alone is usually the guilty person. To this I say that it is not only the woman that is to be blamed, but the man also should be blamed. In my opinion, it is the man who is more guilty than the woman, because of the fact that he is more capable and is usually the cause of the act. Besides, Sir, this idea of a single code of morality for both man and woman is not new to the ethics of this country. We have always had in this country the same standard for man and for woman. We have always held Rama as the symbol of faithfulness to his wife and Sita also has been held as the embodiment of chastity in woman. Our sacred books abound with these moral codes. There-

fore this is nothing new to this country. And besides, Sir, by adopting this amendment we would not be subjecting either the man or the woman to any legal consequences as that is not included in the Bill at all. I therefore suggest that the amendment be accepted by the House."

Mr. R. Nagan Gowda was followed by Mr. J. A. Saldana and Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, both of whom in a very able and convincing speech supported the amendment. Then there was some opposition from one or two councillors when I spoke giving my support to the amendment :

"I am very thankful to the hon. Members of this House who have maintained that there should be only one lofty standard of morality for both the sexes. On this occasion I may bring to their notice the resolutions passed at the various International Women's Conferences.

I. 'That all human beings being equal, that is to say subject to the same natural laws, whether physical or moral, all legal enactments must be equal for all, both men and women alike in their wording and application.

II. 'That all laws, measures or regulations dealing with public order and public morals shall be so framed as not to differentiate between the sexes, either on their wording or in their enforcement.'

"I submit, Sir, that we are not by this Bill punishing individual prostitutes. There is no clause here to punish prostitutes. We are only giving the definition of the word 'Prostitute'. In doing so, if we leave out one party altogether who has to bear a large share of the crime,

then we are repeating the ancient wrong of punishing only one of the two parties. All laws dealing with public morality or public order should be so framed as not to differentiate between the sexes. We do realize that the power of legislation is very limited, and that we cannot hope to enforce high ideals of morality on individuals by means of legislation. It can come only through education, early training and through good social customs but it is absolutely necessary to get rid of unjust, partial, oppressive and impure laws. All those laws which conduce to the pleasures of men, but not to the happiness of women are unjust and unreasonable. It is impossible to clear our cities of prostitutes until men and women are treated alike in matters of sex morality. "Without male chastity female chastity is not possible." Much wrong has been done by the old notions, that only women can be chaste and men cannot be chaste. The Hindu conception of morality was very high at one time. No doubt at the present moment we have fallen away from our ancient ideals. The stories of Rishi Visvamitra and Indra, the king of the Devas, who were punished for their misdeeds are illustrations of this fact. So India once famed for its high spirituality and sex morality, in this period of national regeneration and national revival should bring back all that was best in the past. I really cannot see why we should not accept the proposed definition which will be acceptable to all just and right-thinking men and women all over the world. As there is nothing in the definition that is already in this Bill to show that it applies to men also, it is liable to be misinterpreted by the authorities whom we are now empowering by this legislation to punish the victims. Let us therefore accept this amendment. If the house does not agree to the amendment, let it delete the harmful clause altogether."

Mr. F. E. James of the European Group strongly supported me. Ultimately the House agreed to retain the following definition of prostitution.

"Prostitution means indiscriminate sexual intercourse for hire,"

The harmful clause discriminating between the sexes having been deleted.

The Select Committee has fixed the age at 18 for girls to be rescued from brothels but the Government Member moved an amendment to reduce the age to 16 which I strongly opposed.

"Sir, I oppose this amendment proposed by the hon. the Home Member. It is a very serious matter that girls even under the age of 21 should be procured and kept inside brothels. Those who have heard of brothel life will sympathize with my views. We know that even girls of the age of 16 to 18 are not able to decide what is good for them. Public opinion is very much in my favour as all the witnesses who appeared before the Select Committee were for raising the age of protection to 21. The Age of Consent Committee also, which toured throughout India has made this recommendation. They were of opinion that girls of the age of 16 are not in a position to decide what is good for themselves. Moreover, our girls are brought up in seclusion, they possess little education and if they happen to be taken to a brothel, they undergo tortures there, and they do not know how to escape from them. They are the victims of brothel-keepers. This is a question, Sir, concerning the sacred rights of children and the rights of humanity. The other day we read the case of a tender girl. She was between 16 and 18 years of age. She was led

away to a brothel life ; she had not known that life before ; she did not know what was going to become of her ; she was there for 15 days ; one day when the brothel keeper was away, she ran out and reported the matter to a police sub Inspector. In such cases should we help the girl or not ? Are we to tell such girls that we cannot protect them ? The State has to do its duty to these children while the public also owe a duty to these minor girls. For my part, I do not mind if these girls are looked after by Christian missionaries if the Hindu public do not come forward to give protection to girls below the age of 18. The civilized world has fixed by legislation that girls up to the age of 21 should be given protection. Even according to the Criminal Amendment Act of 1885 of England, any girl under the age of 21 should not be allowed to be in a brothel. The League of Nations also has decided on this age-limit. Brothel life is not a life which any human being would long for. This life is forced upon these young girls. Therefore I am for going beyond the age of 18 and fixing it at 21. We have got reformatory schools for boys of the ages of 18 and 21. Boys between these ages can take care of themselves much better than girls of the same age. Girls who have nobody to look after them do not know where to go. If such girls are kept in brothels, they are subjected to a most terrible life ; no human being would like to live such a life. Are we to tell these girls that we could not protect them ? These are some of the questions which I would like the hon. Members of this House to answer. If the Hindu public do not come forward to help them, I would certainly put them in Christian Homes. We have two such homes in Madras, namely, the Good Shephard Convent and the Salvation Army Home. Christian missions have spent large sums of money on our education, on medical

relief, etc. Moral disease is more harmful than physical disease. Soul is more precious than the body. I would rather like that such girls are accommodated in Christian homes rather than allow them to live in brothels undergoing physical and moral torture."

The Government was gracious enough to withdraw the amendment and now the age of protection is 18.

Then I proposed an amendment to the effect that the police officers when entering brothels for investigation and for rescuing girls, should be accompanied by women officers either paid or honorary appointed for that purpose by the Government. Moving the amendment I made the following remarks:

"Sir, in moving that amendment, my point is, as the staff of the police will be increased to carry out the provisions of this Bill, there should also be a number of women social purity workers on that staff. Indeed necessarily we will need a medical woman because the age of the girls in the brothels will have to be ascertained and an examination of their person will have to be made. In the western countries, to assist the Commissioner of Police in the investigation of the brothels and also in the examination of the inmates, there is a woman police surgeon. That is what I want to gain by this amendment. If this amendment is accepted, not only the work of the police will be very much facilitated, but we will also be respecting the sentiments of those women in the brothels, because, however degraded they may be, still they have got, as human beings, a certain amount of self-respect; hence they are likely to take objection to being examined by men-officers."

I was warmly seconded by many members but the Government raising difficulties of financing the scheme, I had to withdraw very reluctantly my amendment.

Then what I considered to be the most important of all my amendments, the clause that has been left out of the original Vigilance draft, I moved :

**To punish the Third Party living on the earnings
of Prostitution.**

“that a new clause be inserted as follows, after clause 6, and the succeeding clauses be re-numbered :

“7. Whoever knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of a prostitute and exercises control, direction or influence over her movements in such manner as to show that he or she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.”

“Sir, my submission is this: even though we penalise brothel keeping, unless we penalise the commercialized vice also, wherever it exists, the person who makes a living out of the earnings of prostitution will be left unaffected. Our object is to bring under legislation all those procurers and all those who not only live on the earnings of the prostitute but also exercise control, direction or influence her movements. Of late, many glaring instances have come to the notice of the police and also to the attention of the social workers that young girls by their own relations were made to lead a life of immorality. They were actually forced; and lately there was a case where the aunt of the girl made her lead that life.

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The girl herself did not like that because any human being has a natural abhorrence for such a life. So, the girl ran to the police station herself and reported the matter. The aunt still claims the girl because she says that the girl is a minor. The case is now before the criminal session of the Police Department. The girl was brought to our home and so I came to know all about it. There was another case where the father himself was responsible for the girl going astray. They should not only be looked upon as criminals but the person he or she, who wants to make a livelihood out of it, who wants to lead a luxurious life out of the earnings of another who is selling her body, certainly he or she must be less than human. Such a person cannot be treated as a member of any civilized society or a citizen of the State, and cannot claim the rights of citizenship. Such a person ought to be looked down upon as a criminal, even as thieves and murderers. Another case also came to us, where the father himself, quite against the wishes of the girl, made her lead such a life. Later on the case went up to the court and the court decided she was a major and the girl was allowed to have her own way. Many girls have come to our Home, for help saying that their own relations in the house use them for the purpose of money-making and drive them to lead that life. The law should surely give help to such women who really crave for a better life, who, on account of mere helplessness are forced to lead such a life. That is why, Sir, I want this amendment to be introduced. This forms the central feature of the whole Bill. Brothel-keeping might change shape and take another form, if this is not introduced. The brothel-keeper may get hold of one woman, control her movements and influence her to lead such a life. I have already stated in my note :

“The essential ingredients of an offence of this class

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are (1) intimate association for gain, (2) direction or control over the prostitute's movements, and (3) abetment of prostitution. Where these conditions are satisfied, there cannot be any reasonable objection to provide for the punishment of this class of offenders.'

"This clause is not after all worded in a more severe form than the Acts which exist in Calcutta, Burma and Bombay. I do not see any reason why Madras should lag behind in this very important legislation. Madras is supposed to be the most advanced in education in the whole of India and also in the matter of the social and political emancipation of women. Then, why should we not have a clause like the one that exist in the other Provinces of Bombay, Calcutta, Ceylon and Burma? Moreover the question of punishing a third party for encouraging this crime was considered by the League of Nations, and they have also come to the decision that such a provision should find a place in all legislation which is intended to suppress commercialized vice. With these words, I move this amendment."

Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliar seconded me. The Government Member opposed me for the following reasons.

"Sir, I have to oppose this amendment. I have considered this very carefully and I think it will lead to many practical difficulties and hardships, especially in a province like ours where there is the institution of Devadasis. On account of this I regret I have to oppose this amendment."

To which I replied :—

"Sir, as the hon. the Home Member has introduced the question of the Devadasis, I would like to answer

that point only. The question of the dedication of Devadasis to temples has been engaging the attention of the whole of India for the last 60 years, and there has been legislation in the past also to put down this evil. This same Council accepted a resolution asking this Government and the Central Government, to undertake legislation to abolish dedication of women to Hindu temples. A Bill has also been accepted to amend the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, in order to do away with the Devadasi institution in temples, the object being that there should be no association of immorality with temple worship. We know there are prostitutes among the Devadasis. Of course, I would not blame them, because they imagine that religion sanctions such a conduct and the age-long custom is behind them. Now we have the Sarda Act for penalising early marriages. Marriage is certainly a practice that has been recognized by all the civilized nations as a very noble social convention and when we work for putting down early marriages, the evils of early consummation and early-wifehood, why not Government support a legislation that is intended to eradicate a custom that encourages immorality. It is only in this Presidency that Devadasi practice is widely prevalent ; not so much in Bombay and there is nothing of that kind in Calcutta ; and recently in the United Provinces, they have passed an Act, called the Protection of Naik Girls' Act. That Act goes even deeper. It authorizes the Magistrates in the districts to punish those families and guardians or parents who bring up girls to lead a life of prostitution and thus they have struck at the very root of the evil. I am told that these are hereditary prostitutes. If I may explain, the Devadasi class would have become extinct long ago, if they had not been allowed to adopt children. They take hold of unclaimed children or sometimes they purchase beautiful children at heavy

prices. When we know that prostitution is an evil, are we to tolerate such a practice and allow these children to carry on their hereditary evil trade? These children are trained even from their infancy to lead such a life. All children are innocent and they can be moulded into any form we like. How could the enlightened and educated members of our society posing themselves as belonging to a civilized race tolerate a known evil that is going on in the guise of custom and religion? Are we to be a party to the exploitation of the rights of children? It is outraging humanity itself. So, in the name of justice and in the name of humanity, I would ask the hon. the Home Member not to raise this point which has been discussed in many Councils and in the Assembly, and the principle of which has been accepted. Moreover, a resolution to put down dedication has been accepted even by this very Council and a law has been passed. I would therefore request the hon. the Home Member not to obstruct social reform and social progress. Sir, this is a very important amendment which would strike at the very root of the evil and rid the Presidency of this most ancient social vice."

My reply also was seconded by the Swarajist Member, Mr. Nagan Gowda, and by Mr. F.E. James, the non-official European Member who had the goodness also to vote against the Government on this matter. The Commissioner of Police who was an expert member on the Government side most unexpectedly opposed my amendment.

During the discussion on my amendment, to my great surprise, one hon. Member moved an amendment to my

amendment—which is this: “Provided that nothing in this Act shall apply to the families of hereditary Devadasis now in existence”, which was seconded by another hon. Member, their speeches being frequently interrupted by laughter and questions showing that the amendment was not acceptable to the Council. When it was put to the vote, it was unanimously voted down. Therefore this Act as it is, I feel glad to announce, does include in its operation the Devadasis who carry on the business of prostitution, and as a matter of course, the Act will give protection to the Devadasi minor girls who are found in houses of ill fame.

I must in justice and fairness state that the majority in the House were for accepting my amendment, in a slightly altered form atleast, but under the advice of its expert officer the Government would not accept my clause. The above incident shows clearly how some of the European Officials holding responsible offices in this country never care to keep themselves in touch with what is going on in the progressive world outside.

The League of Nations' expert survey has revealed that in all civilized countries there is penal legislation to punish the third party who live on the earnings of prostitution and the British Indian Delegation that visited India in 1927, discussed the Vigi-

lance bill, with a few of its members and had pointed out that the clause to punish the third party who live on the earnings of prostitution was a very important one. Still the Government has not been enlightened on that point. It was a most unexpected turn of events that Government itself which promised on the previous day to be neutral towards this clause should have opposed it with all its strength. Whether such an action was due to ignorance on the part of the Government or due to the fear of offending a certain section of people who exploit female destitution and helplessness, it is difficult for one to say; still the result is the same—the Madras Act has been weakened by the deletion of that important clause which was in the original Vigilance Bill.

From the moment I learnt that this Bill had been introduced with the clause to penalise the third party living on the earnings of prostitution deleted, I became unhappy. First of all, I thought of introducing the complete Bill myself and afterwards I hoped to get the clause in during the select committee stage, failing which, I was confident of its being accepted by the Council during its final stage, as even the leader of the opposition promised to support my amendment and the Home Member promised me on the previous day that the Government would be neutral on this clause. My failure

to get in the amendment was a sore disappointment for me and I must confess that I felt it keenly. On this occasion I missed very much the Members of the Congress Group, the majority of whom had been my staunch supporters, who had then kept out of the Council and I honestly felt that the Council as was then constituted was not a truly representative body.

While I sat brooding sadly over these events, the President called out my name for my final remarks on the Bill. I did not know that I had to congratulate the Council after the Bill had been passed into law and I was not in a mood also to make a congratulatory speech. Very reluctantly, I rose from my seat and blurted out these few sentences.

"I beg to thank, Mr. President, the hon. Members of this House including yourself on behalf of the oppressed and the depressed womanhood of this Presidency for having passed this important piece of social legislation. This legislation has been long overdue and even though we are a bit late, as compared with other Presidencies, it is a much better Act in one respect than that of Bombay or Calcutta. I also thank the author of the Bill the hon. Member Mr. Venkatarama. Ayyar for readily taking it up and piloting it through so successfully.

"Sir, this legislation will help the social workers and also the authorities to protect minor girls who need very much our protection. It will also to a great extent educate public opinion in this Presidency, because we have been noticing of late, after the Bill has been intro-

duced and after evidence had been taken in the Select Committee, more girls being brought to our custody by the Police. This shows that even before this legislation was on the statute book it has done much good to the public.

Sir, in this connection I appeal to the Government to carry out the provisions of this Bill in a humanitarian spirit. Much depends upon the way in which an enactment is worked. This Bill gives large powers to the Police. I moved an amendment to appoint a woman officer and the Government were not good enough to accept it. Without the help and co-operation of experienced and trained women of character and sympathy many practical difficulties would be met with. The brothel inmates are merely the victims of neglect and a wrong social system. They are mostly destitute and poor children. Some of them are there having been deserted by their husbands and the others having been kidnapped by some unscrupulous and subhuman individuals and sold to the brothel-keepers. The brothel-keepers themselves are human beings of a low order and come from the lowest grade of society. Under the circumstances the Government should see that these girls are really protected and their interests safeguarded. However low and fallen they may be owing to circumstances beyond their control, there is the sanctity of the human soul which should be preserved. There is the personal right of the individual which, however degraded a human being may be, must be protected. Personal liberty should not be trespassed upon and that is why I urged that women who are experienced and sympathetic and appointed for the purpose should accompany the police officer entering a brothel for the purpose of ascertaining whether an offence is being committed. Now we

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have two such good ladies who are doing this work. One of those is Miss Shephard working for the Vigilance Association in Calcutta. She has been lent to the Association by the Moral and Social Hygiene Society in London and she is paid by that Society. She gives her service free for the uplift of her fallen sisters. If public spirited and philanthropic gentlemen should come forward (even if the Government does not) and raise the funds necessary for the appointment of these women officers to help the police in the investigation of these brothels, they will be conferring real benefit upon the society and their fallen sisters would bless them. Sir, with these words, I once more thank this hon. House for the good humanitarian measure that it has passed to day."

I was seconded by that able and enlightened ruler His Highness the Maharajah of Pithapuram.

"I first congratulate the author of the Bill my hon. friend Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Ayyar. Then I wish to congratulate our esteemed Deputy President Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi who is, I believe, in no small measure responsible for this piece of legislation. Then, Sir, I beg to offer my humble yet most grateful thanks to you, Sir, for your wise and praiseworthy attitude (applause) in trying to enable us to pass this Bill into law now. This Act was one of the crying needs of our province. In some cases innocent children, of about 8 or 9 years of age were being dragged into brothels and made to live in the most harrowing conditions. The diabolical treatment meted out to them in brothels is heart-rending and blood-curdling. This hon. House has so wisely decided to put an end to these diabolical deeds

and in all humility I congratulate the hon. House and invoke the blessings of God on it."

The Bill was passed into Law.

Even though the very subject is a much tabooed one and many amongst us do not like it to be discussed on the open platforms yet I cannot but record it in writing that I have experienced nothing but kindness, courtesy and words of appreciation and admiration from the vocal public in regard to this part of my work. We have read that the great and good woman Josephine Butler when starting her campaign against the State regulation of vice in England in the year 1869, was faced with much opposition showing that the public in England at that time were much less enlightened than the public in India in the year 1929.

The following extract from her writing gives us that impression :

" The abolitionists carried on their campaign in the teeth of obstacles that seemed insuperable. The press was bitterly hostile or silent, the Church was (though again with certain shining exceptions) contemptuously hostile, the average public opinion was apathetic or shocked. The fact that the leader of the agitation against the Contagious Disease Act was a woman, aggravated the scandal and stirred up a kind of opposition that a man in the same position need not have encountered, for in 1869 it was considered almost indecent for women to speak from a platform. The press when it was not boycotting the whole subjects descended to the mis-

representation of the vilest description. Mrs. Butler and those who fought with her were described as "Women with a hobby too nasty to be touched" "a clique of noisy perambulating legislators" the shrieking sisterhood "indecent maennads" etc. It described their protest as "wanton nastiness" "historical claptrap", "reckless falsehood." The 'Saturday Review' which excelled itself in virulence gravely declared that "would as soon have the great sewer question discussed in a novel as a woman's position in the world. The outburst of the Daily and Weekly press were matched in the speeches of opponents in the House of Commons. A member of Parliament for Portsmouth, probably expressed the feelings of many honourable members when he said in the House on February 13th 1872, "I look upon these women who have taken up this matter as worse than prostitutes."

The above was the reception that was accorded to that herioc and the most sympathetic English woman in the 19th century.

Just contrast the situation in India. When we started the campaign to end the Devadasi system and suppress the commercialized vice, we experienced a different kind of reception from the public. The sympathetic utterances of the Indian Press, both vernacular and English, the helpful attitude of the public as revealed by the innumerable meetings convened in support of my efforts and the resolutions passed by men and women associations and above all the unanimous support given by the local Council to such motions and the safe passage of the bills into

acts is a true testimony to the popularity of such a reform in this country.

With 8 per cent of literacy among our men and 2 per cent among our women, it has been possible for me to secure the public sympathy and support for my moral and social reform measures. Again while all the people's parties in the Council favoured every scheme for the amelioration of our women's conditions, I found that the nationalist and the Congress with one or two individual exceptions, have been my staunch and enthusiastic supporters, especially the Andhras in khaddar dress and Gandhi caps. The president himself an Andhra has been uniformly kind and courteous to me and was so loyal to the women's cause that he would never spare himself any pains to help me at times of difficulties.

As for the duties of a Deputy President, I was not taxed in the least as I was asked to preside only during the absence of the President which happened rarely. After the first year, I overcame my nervousness and experienced no difficulty in the discharge of that duty.

AMENDMENTS TO THE MADRAS
CHILDREN ACT

HAVING worked for years on the committees of the Madras Children Aid Society and the Madras Society for the Protection of Children, I got into intimate touch with the actual operation of the Madras Children Act of 1920 and I found that the Act was defective in many respects.

Further many important witnesses that gave evidence before the Select Committee on the Brothel Bill pointed out very many serious defects in the Madras Children Act and suggested also the necessary amendments.

A lady social purity worker suggested that the Devadasis should be prevented from publicly making their minor girls dance and sing with a view to earn money. The secretary of the Devadasi Reform Association, Repalle taluk pointed out to us that the Indian Penal Code section 372 and 373 punishes people for selling, or letting or hiring a minor girl for prostitution and a minor girl if purchased for prostitution is criminal but when parents allow their own daughters to practise prostitution and actively encourage it there is no

punishment under those sections. Therefore I drafted the following amendments :

" That minor girls found living in the company of individual prostitutes and the children of the prostitutes should be removed from their custody to a Home intended for such girls and maintained by either the Government or private philanthropic bodies and no class, caste or community can claim any exemption from the operation of this clause by reason of its longstanding custom or usage."

" If any person who either as the guardian or being the parent of a girl under 18 years of age having such girl in his or her charge or care or under his or her influence causes, encourages or abets the seduction or prostitution of that girl or makes her live in a manner which involves illegal or promiscuous intercourse with any man or men other than her lawfully wedded husband, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term over three years or a fine of Rs. 1000 or both."

As I failed to incorporate the above into the Act for the suppression of brothels and immoral traffic Acts I decided to have the The Madras Children Act IV of 1920 amended on the following lines.

Objects and reasons for Amendments

"It is recognised by all civilised nations that the first and primary duty of the State is to secure for every child the right to be bodily, mentally and socially fit. Hence the measure adopted to achieve that end are both preventive and remedial ; but we in this Presidency have till now been devoting our attention and thought only to the latter, but our everyday experience tells us that it is

far more profitable to the individual and to the State, to prevent the onset of blindness and other physical infirmities, rather than give treatment after those diseases have set in and have caused damage to the vital organ. Apart from physical deformities caused by ignorance of parents, there are much more serious afflictions of the Society brought about by a diseased and perverted human mind resulting from bad associations, and improper environments, such as habits of drinking, thefts, prostitution, etc.

We know that our parent efforts are directed towards providing hospitals, asylums, rescue homes, blind and deaf schools, and thus segregating and stigmatising the individuals after they have become physical and moral wrecks and a menace to society.

All the same, it is the State and the Society that has to bear the whole burden and the responsibility. From experience of other advanced countries we learn that our labour and money can be more profitably utilised in preventing or reducing the above mentioned serious consequences, arising from parental neglect, or the association of the young with undesirable individuals or living in improper or immoral surroundings.

Modern psychological research has proved that the child's character is largely determined by factors of environments and training in its early life.

The Madras Children Act does not contain any provision for the prevention and punishment of offences against children. Under our present Act, only the vagrants and youthful offenders are tried and sent to the Children's Aid Society, Madras; and a few cases of children rescued from brothels on information supplied to the police by rescue workers or well intentioned neighbours.

Even though the present section of the Madras Act have been copied from the English Act of 1908, still the other important provisions that effectively deal with offences committed against children have been unfortunately omitted.

The English Act of 1908 as well as those of the Bombay and the Calcutta Act contain provisions not only for the immediate removal of children from unhealthy and immoral surroundings such as the company of a prostitute, a drunkard ; but there are also provisions to prevent to bet, to wager, and to pawn articles or to beg, and children being given intoxicating liquors.

My present Bill intends to amend the Madras Act so as to bring it on a line with the Acts of the other Indian Provinces as well as the English Act. Further there is a clause in my Bill to prevent the training of girl children by Devadasis for a life of concubinage or prostitution. We know that in this Presidency there is a section among the Devadasis who do not hold any inams and hence do not render any service to the temple, but still persists in training their girls to a life of prostitution and dedicating them to temples to be styled "Devadasis" with the sole purpose of living on the earnings of prostitution. As these have been successfully evading the penal clauses contained in the Penal Code sec.372 and 373, under the plea of religion and custom and as my amendment to the Hindu Religious Endowment Act will affect the inam-holding Devadasis only it is very necessary that those children also should be guarded against any such abuse of parental authority. It is worthy of our earnest consideration that in the United Provinces which is faced with a similar problem, a special Act named "The Naik Girls' Protection Act" has been

recently passed by the U. P. Legislature to protect the minor girls of the Naik community from being trained to a life of prostitution.

As one of the important aims of the State is the protection of the future generation, a certain amount of legal and social safeguards are found necessary in every country to prevent abnormal and anti-social elements in society contaminating human life in its very source. "

I wrote to the Government of India for sanction to amend the Act and I obtained it, but I had not the time to introduce another Bill during the life time of the Council.

XVIII

CONCLUSION

Whatever I have been able to do in the local Council for the betterment of women in this presidency, the credit of that work should go firstly to the Women's Indian Association and secondly to the Madras Legislative Council itself. I have been associated with the many sided activities of the Association from its very inception in the year 1917. I remember very distinctly the meeting we had under the presidency of Dewan Bahadur Varadarajulu Naidu in Soundarya Mahal Hall to ask for the grant of municipal franchise for our women and again the first meeting in my late lamented friend Justice T. V. Seshagiri Aiyer's bungalow to consider the ways and means of securing legislative franchise for our women.

Indian Women's Franchise

A history of the Indian Women's franchise work will not be out of place here. When Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India visited India in the year 1917, a group of Indian Women with the two ardent and devoted workers for the Indian women's cause namely Mrs. Margaret Cousins and Mrs. Dorothy Jinarajadasa waited on him with the

demand that when the terms of Indian franchise were drawn up the word "People" should be understood as including women. In April 1918 at the several provincial conferences of our men and women, resolutions were unanimously passed for the removal of sex disqualification from the reform scheme, which good example was promptly followed by the Provincial Congress Committees in the same year throughout India.

The Muslim League representing the whole Muslim opinion of the country voted at its meeting in September 1918 in favour of the franchise for Indian Women.

The special National Congress held in Bombay in September 1918 passed the resolution by a majority of votes that "Women possessing the same qualifications as are laid down for men in any part of the scheme shall not be disqualified on account of sex."

Still when the Montague-Chelmsford scheme of reforms for India was published, women were completely left out of the reform scheme, in spite of the above representations.

When the South-Borough Committee appointed to put the reform scheme on a workable basis, was touring throughout India, representations to the effect that women should be included in the franchise, were made by forty branches of the Women's Indian Association, Women Graduates' Unions,

Women's Home Rule League and other important women's organizations in the country. When the report of the committee appeared in April 1919, the women's claims were completely ignored, only two members of the committee Sir Sankar Nair and Mr. Hogg, an European member having favoured the women's franchise. Women were much disappointed at the result and in every province protest meetings were held, resolutions were passed and about 11 cablegrams sent to the Secretary of State, Members of Parliament, to the Premier, etc.

In July 1919 after the introduction of the Government of India Bill into Parliament, the joint select committee of members of both the Houses of Parliament took evidence from the Indian deputations, which came to London for that purpose from India. The Indian men unanimously were of opinion that women should not be debarred from the right of voting but the evidence of the South-Borough Committee was otherwise. Women all over India protested, met, discussed, cabled resolutions and finally decided to send two or three Indian ladies to England to speak to the British public on this question. Dr. Annie Besant, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Lady Tata were the three prominent ladies who undertook that task.

Many public meetings were held in many parts of England and the British Women's

Associations showed much sympathy and interest in this question ; but the Joint Select Committee decided to leave the question of women's franchise for India to be settled by the future Legislative Councils of India for each province.

Knowing that how the British women had to fight for their rights it was no surprise to us, that the British men never favoured the idea of the Indian women enjoying the rights of franchise along with their men even though the Indian men themselves were not only willing to share with their womenfolk whatever rights they possessed but also strongly supported their claims to an equal place in the new constitution.

After the inauguration of the Montague—Chelmsford Reforms in India, the public knows how the present Law Member, Hon. Sir M. Krishnan Nayar of the Justice Party had the goodness to move the resolution on women franchise in the local Council and had it passed almost unanimously.

At this moment I should not omit to mention the valuable help we had from the late much lamented Sir T. Sadasiva Iyer and his worthy partner Lady Sadasiva Iyer, from the latter as the Vice-president of the Women's Indian Association and from the former as the loyal friend of the women's cause. Lady Sadasiva Iyer headed the deputation of

women which waited upon Lord Willingdon to ask for the right for women to sit in the Council and Lord Willingdon promised to recommend our proposal to the Secretary of State for India and so it was in 1926 that we were granted the right to sit in the Council.

How I became a legislator has already been explained in the first chapter.

My Life in Council

Now I carry with me very many pleasant memories of my Council life. From the president, from the secretary, to the clerks in the office, from all parties in the Council, I experienced nothing but kindness and courtesy. When I got into the Council, I was only a child in politics and still I was listened to with respect and affection which certainly reacted upon me and gave me courage and stimulus to introduce many useful measures into the Council. The able leader of the Justice Party, the much lamented the late Raja of Panagal who entertained a high respect for womanhood in general, helped the women's cause in the Council by his great influence over his party.

Whenever I was in the chair, the Council was most polite and considerate. In the drafting of the Bills, I had ready help from the experienced councillors, particularly from the president Rao Bahadur C. V. S. Narasimha Raju. There was no sex rivalry and no sex antagonism. The public, the press, the

platform all co-operated with me and advocated the women's cause and the women's reforms. Not only the Indian men themselves initiated the many reforms for the women's uplift in this country but also at every new step we took in public life, they continued to give their full support, sympathy and co-operation.

Indian women are really fortunate in that respect. When India secures self-Government, there is not the least doubt that Indian women would very soon get rid of all their disabilities such as the custom of early-marriage, purdah, unequal marriage laws, unjust inheritance laws etc., customs introduced into the Hindu Society during the turbulent period of the Indian history for the safety and protection of its women but still allowed to exist through the ignorance and illiteracy of the masses and the neutrality of the Government towards social evils.

Our Indebtedness to the West

Before I close, I will be failing in my duty if I do not record in writing my love and gratitude for those of my Western sisters who having made our cause their own, have devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the regeneration of the Indian people.

Dr. Besant's valuable contribution to the Indian Women's cause will always find a high place in the history of the Indian

women's movement. By her vast learning, by her wonderful organising capacity and by her great influence over the orthodox section of the Hindu Society, she has been able to focus the attention of the Indian public over the women's problems in this country. Herself and her small band of faithful workers have been able to arouse and awaken the women of all creeds, castes and nationalities in this country not only to theirs but also to their country's needs.

Side by side with their activities which have been based upon India's religion, her philosophy and tradition, other forces also have been at work, namely, the noble and inspiring examples of thousands of missionary workers whose work have been chiefly among the poor, the depressed and the down-trodden, and who have proved the futility of the Hindu-caste-system by turning out fine citizens, men and women from the so-called untouchables and the low caste Hindus.

Their lives and examples have taught us that nations and races cannot but be inter-dependent that the good things of the world can never remain the exclusive property of one country or race and it will not be long before the nations of the world realise their mutual kinship and dependency.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Prevention of early marriage

Whereas it is expedient to raise the marriageable age of Hindu girls and boys in the Presidency of Madras, it is hereby enacted as follows :—

1. This act may be called the Age of marriage Act, 1928.

2. It extends to the whole of the Presidency of Madras.

3. Any person who knowingly or wilfully performs the ceremony of a Hindu who has not on the date of such marriage completed, if a male, the age of 18 years, or if a female, the age of 14 years, or take active part in the performance of such marriage or being a guardian of either of the parties to the marriage gives his consent to it shall be liable to simple imprisonment for a term that may extend to six months or a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or to both.

4. No Court shall take cognizance of an offence under the preceding section, except on a complaint made within a period of two years after the offence was committed by any five adult male Hindus or by the Executive committee of any society for the prevention of early marriage among the Hindus registered under the Indian Companies Act.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

The evil consequences of early marriage on the individual and on the nation are too well known to us. To mention only a few of such evils are, first of all the premature motherhood with all the attendant disabilities, the production of a race physically and mentally unfit to stand the struggle of life and the saddest consequence of all is

the large number of virgin widows amidst us, who for no fault of their own are made to undergo many hardships in our society.

The system of early marriage is also responsible for the large percentage of illiteracy and the slow spread of higher education among our women. At an age when our girls are too young to understand the significance of married life, when they are too young to discharge those functions to satisfaction, the heavy burden and responsibility of wife-hood and mother-hood are most pitilessly forced upon them, which is the primary cause not only of ill-developed physic, ill-health and a high maternal and infantile mortality among the higher class Hindus, but also of our very slow national progress.

Hence the most forward States such as Mysore and Baroda have already passed legislation to the effect of preventing marriages below 14 and 18 for girls and boys respectively. Even though all the women's conferences have unanimously passed a resolution to the effect, that the marriageable age should be raised to 16 and 21 for girls and boys respectively ; as a first step to achieve that end with favour I have drafted a bill on lines similar to Mysore and Baroda.

APPENDIX B

BILL TO AMEND THE MADRAS HINDU RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS ACT, 1926

Preamble

Whereas it is expedient to put an end to the present practice of dedication of young girls as Devadasis in the Hindu temples in the Madras Presidency, it is hereby enacted as follows :—

Short Title

This Act shall be called the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments (Amendment) Act 1929.

In section 44 the following proviso shall be inserted :—

“ Provided that where a grant of land has been made to dancing girls or Devadasis for the performance of any service whatever in any temple, such service inam land shall be enfranchised to the present holder thereof and she shall not be required to perform any service in the temple.”

Statement of Objects And Reasons

The system of dedication of young girls to Hindu temples might probably have originated with the noblest and the highest of motives ; but now seeing that it has degenerated into something highly objectionable and that the majority of these girls take to a life of impurity as is so very well known to the general public, it is necessary that the sanction of our temple authorities to such a practice of dedication which breeds immorality, promiscuity and irresponsibility in both men and women be done away with in the interest of the individuals and the nation at large and thus the public be disabused of the notion that our religion encourages immorality in either man or woman and that

the service of these women in any way forms an essential part of the worship in the temples. It may here be stated that the progressive and enlightened state of Mysore has abolished the practice of dedication to the temples even as early as 1909, as is evidenced in the G. O. No. 1560 71 Muz. F. 84-05-3 dated Bangalore 10th April, 1909.

Mrs. Muthulakshmi Reddi.

M.B. & C.M., M.L.C.

APPENDIX C

MADRAS ACT No. V OF 1929

PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MADRAS

[Received the assent of the Governor on the 12th April 1929, and that of the Governor-General on the 13th May 1929; the assent of the Governor-General was first published in the "Fort St. George Gazette" of the 4th June 1929]

An Act further to Amend the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926.

Preamble

WHEREAS it is expedient to put an end to the present practice of dedication of young girls as Devadasis for service in Hindu temples in the Presidency of Madras ;

AND WHEREAS the enfranchisement or freeing of lands held by them on condition of service in the said temples from such condition will be an effective step in doing so ;

Madras Act II of 1927

AND WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926, for these purposes ;

AND WHEREAS the previous sanction of the Governor-General has been obtained to the passing of this Act ;

It is hereby enacted as follows :

Short title

1. This Act may be called the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments (Amendment) Act, 1929.

Insertion of new section 44-A in Madras Act II of 1927

2. After section 44 of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926, the following section shall be inserted, namely :—

**Enfranchisement or freeing of lands, etc., held by
a devadasi on condition of service in a temple**

“ 44-A. (1) (a) (i) Where the remuneration for any service to be performed by a Devadasi in a temple consists of lands granted or continued in respect of, or annexed to, such service by the Government, the Local Government shall enfranchise the said lands from the condition of service, by the imposition of quit-rent ;

(ii) Where the remuneration for such service consists of an assignment of land revenue so granted or continued, the Local Government shall enfranchise such assignment of revenue from the condition of service :

Provided that where, at the time when proceedings are taken under this sub-section, the Devadasi is herself the owner of the lands in respect of which the assignment of revenue has been made, enfranchisement shall be effected and quit-rent imposed in the manner laid down in sub-clause (i) ;

(iii) Where the remuneration for such service consists in part of lands and in part of an assignment of land revenue, enfranchisement of the lands shall be effected in the manner laid down in sub-clause (i) and of the assignment of land revenue in the manner laid down in sub-clause (ii) ;

Explanation.—For the purposes of this clause, a grant shall be deemed to consist of an assignment of land revenue in all cases in which the Devadasi herself is not, at the time specified in the proviso to sub-clause (ii), the owner of the lands in question.

(b) Enfranchisement under clause (a) shall be

effected in accordance with such rules as the Local Government may make in this behalf and shall take effect as and from such date as the Local Government may fix.

(2) Where the remuneration for such service consists, in whole or in part, of lands or of produce of lands not falling under sub-section (1), the Local Government shall direct the Collector to determine the amount of rent payable on the lands or the produce in question. The Collector shall thereupon, after giving notice to the parties concerned and holding such inquiry as may be prescribed by the Local Government, by an order determine the amount of rent, and in doing so, he shall have due regard to

(a) the rent payable by the tenant for lands of a similar description and with similar advantages in the same villages or neighbouring villages ; and

(b) the improvements, if any, effected by the Devadasi, in respect of the lands :

Such order shall be communicated to the parties concerned and also published in the manner prescribed.

(3) The amount of rent fixed by the Collector under sub-section (2) may be questioned by petition presented to the Board of Revenue within three months of the date of the publication of the order under the said sub-section but subject to the result of such petition, the order of the Collector fixing the amount of rent under sub-section (2) shall be final and shall not be liable to be contested in any court of law :

Provided, however, that the Board of Revenue shall have power on sufficient grounds to entertain a petition presented after the expiration of the period of three months.

(4) While determining the rent under sub-section (2), the Collector shall fix a date from which the order shall take effect and such lands or produce shall be deemed to

have been freed from the condition of service as and from the date so fixed.

(5) No obligation to render any service relating to any temple to which any Devadasi may be subject by reason of any grant of land or assignment of land revenue or produce derived from land, shall be enforceable on such land, assignment or produce being enfranchised or freed, as the case may be, in the manner hereinbefore provided.

(6) No order passed under sub-sections (1), (2) and (3) shall operate as a bar to the trial of any suit or issue relating to the right to enjoy the land or assignment of land revenue or produce derived from land as the case may be.

(7) (a) The quit-rent imposed under sub-section (1) shall be payable to the temple concerned.

(b) The assignment of land revenue enfranchised under sub-section (1) or the rent fixed under sub-sections (2) and (3) as the case may be shall be payable to the Devadasi concerned during her lifetime and after her death to the temple concerned.

(8) For the purpose of this section 'Devadasi' shall mean any Hindu unmarried female, who is dedicated to a temple. "

APPENDIX D

A BILL TO PREVENT THE DEDICATION OF WOMEN TO HINDU TEMPLES IN THE PRESIDENCY OF MADRAS

Preamble

Whereas the dedication of women to Hindu Temples results in such women adopting the profession of prostitute dancing girls, it is desirable and expedient to put an end to the practice of such dedication and whereas the previous sanction of the Governor General-in Council has been obtained, it is enacted as follows :—

Short Title

This act shall be called the Prevention of Dedication Act, 1929.

Dedication of Hindu Women to Temples Declared Illegal

2. The performance in the precincts of Hindu Temples or other places of worship of *Pottukattu* or *Gajje Puja* or any similar ceremony to a Hindu woman with a view to dedicate her is hereby declared illegal and shall be illegal.

Dedicated Women May Contract Valid Marriages.

3. A Hindu woman who has gone through a process of dedication by the performance of *Pottukattu* or *Gajje Puja* or any similar ceremony may thereafter contract a legal marriage and it shall be recognised as valid notwithstanding any law or custom to the contrary.

Penalty for Dedication of Women to Temples.

4. Whoever permits, performs or takes part in the performance or abets the performance within the precincts of a Hindu temple of the ceremony of Pottukattu or Gajje Puja or any similar ceremony with a view to dedicate any Hindu woman shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year and shall also be liable to fine.

Saving of Penalty Provided by Other Law

5. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent any person from being liable under Section 372 of the Indian Penal Code or under any other law, to any other or higher punishment than is provided by this Act; provided that no person shall be prosecuted under this Act if he was convicted under any of the provisions of law mentioned above.

Statement Of Objects and Reasons.

Not only the inam-holding Devadasis but also other Devadasis dedicate a large number of girls to Hindu temples by going through Pottukattu or Gajje Puja or similar ceremony in Hindu temples. Whatever the origin of the practice in ancient days of the dedication of women as Devadasis in Hindu temples, it is unfortunately the case that the practice has now degenerated mainly into a method of initiating young women to a life of immorality and prostitution. The existence or otherwise of Shastric sanction to the practice of dedication as Devadasis is therefore immaterial. The Shastras are against vice and impurity of all kinds, and enlightened public opinion is against tolerating the continuance of a practice which, in the name of service to God, has condemned a certain class of women to a life of either concubinage or prostitution. A Hindu woman

who is so dedicated is considered by custom to be incapable of contracting a valid marriage thereafter. Therefore, it is highly desirable and expedient to prohibit the performance of dedication of girls to Hindu temples within the precincts of any Hindu temple and legalise the marriage of such girls when contracted after such dedication. There have been previous attempts at putting an end to this practice of dedication, but they have been, so to say, indirect and have not produced the desired result. By amendments to Sections 372 and 373 of the I. P. C., the age limit for the disposal of minor girls for purposes of prostitution has been raised from 16 to 18 years. But though at the time when this change was effected it was supposed that it would reduce if not put an end to, the evil of dedication of girls to temples, it has failed to achieve this desired result, because it does not deal with the dedication of girls as a whole. Sections 372 & 373 of the I. P. C., are evaded by the temples allowing dedication after the girl attains 18 years of age and in the mofussils, even minor girls are dedicated even today because, the temple authorities, the parent and the general public honestly feel that religion sanctions it and the law is not absolutely against it. A legislative enactment is therefore necessary in this province for dealing with the practice of dedication *per se* of Hindu girls and women without touching the existing penalties for the disposal of minor girls for immoral purposes dealt with by Sections 372 and 373 of the I. P. C.

My object in bringing in this Bill is two-fold ; firstly to have a law declaring that dedication of girls to Hindu temples is illegal and to prohibit such dedication; and secondly, to punish the persons taking part in the ceremony of dedication. In this connection, I may point out that in the adjoining Native States of Mysore, the Government have prohibited the dedication of girls in Muzrai tem-

ples. The Mysore Government prohibited the dedication of Hindu girls in its temples by proceedings dated 28th January 1910, which runs thus:—"The Government observe that whatever may be the euphemism by which the true nature of the ceremony is concealed, Gajje Puja has an intimate connection with dedication to the profession of a prostitute dancing girl. They are not prepared to allow the performance of such a ceremony in a Muzrai temple and are satisfied from the depositions and the opinion of the Muzrai Agamik on record that no hardship will be caused by the prohibition of the performance of Gajje Puja or any similar ceremony within the precincts of any temple under the control of Government in the Muzrai Department."

If the British Government in India have not yet undertaken legislation on the point, it is probably out of a tender regard to alleged religious susceptibilities of Hindus. To show that public opinion is in favour of the abolition of the system, and in response to the appeal of several men and women associations and hundreds of members of the community of Devadasis themselves I have brought forward this Bill.

